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N. LAZARUS
OPTICIAN
21, QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL HONGKONG

The China Mail

ESTABLISHED 1845

December 17, 1920, Temperature 65

Barometer 30.03

Rainfall 0.10 inch

Humidity 73.

December 17, 1919, Temperature 60.

JEYES



(By Royal Appointment)
THE BEST
DISINFECTANT.

No. 18,137.

六拜禮

號八十月二十年十二百九千一英

HONGKONG, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1920

日九初月一十申庚九百九千一

PRICE \$3.00 Per Month

BUSINESS NOTICES

HIGH-CLASS CONFECTIONERY CAILLER'S CHOCOLATES

OF THE FINEST QUALITY, NEATLY PACKED
in ELEGANT BOXES of 1 lb., 2 lbs. & 4 lbs.

The first shipment of really high-class
Chocolates that are EQUAL TO
PRE-WAR QUALITY.

At very reasonable prices.

A. S. WATSON & CO., LTD.,
THE HONGKONG DISPENSARY.

A WORLD-WIDE REPUTATION FOR
OVER THREE-QUARTERS of a CENTURY

WILKINSON'S
SARSAPARILLA

WONDERFUL PURIFIER of the HUMAN BLOOD
Torpid Liver, Debility, Eruptions, &c.

WILKINSON'S INDISPENSABLE TO
SARSAPARILLA ALL WHO VALUE HEALTH

BEWARE OF IMITATIONS AND SUBSTITUTES

A. S. Watson & Co., Hongkong Dispensary, and Queen's Dispensary.

DRAGON MOTOR CAR CO. (THE EUROPEAN GARAGE)

Motor Cars for Sale and Hire.

Garages at

24, Des Vaux Road. Tel. 452 & 3552.

YEE SANG FAT CO.

XMAS GIFTS

FOR EVERYBODY

FANCY HANDKERCHIEFS
SILK SHAWLS & SCARFS
DRESSING GOWNS AND
DRESSING CASES

XMAS CARDS

in beautiful designs.
Many other Xmas Gifts.

YEE SANG FAT CO.

Queen's Road and D'Agular Street.

CAPE WINES

OLARET
DRAKENSTEIN (Hock Style)
SAVIGNON BLANC (Hock Style)

CALDBECK, MACGREGOR & CO., LD.
15, QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL. TEL. 75.

DIAMONDS, WATCHES & JEWELLERY

do not forget that you have to take more care in the choice
of your dealer than you would with other merchandise.

Buy reputable goods from a reputable firm

J. ULLMANN & CO.

French firm, Est. 1860.

THE DOLLAR.

Today's closing rate 3 11/16
Today's opening rate 3 11/15

SPECIAL CABLE

BILLION TRAGEDY.

MINE RUPTION.

THIRTY-THREE LIVES LOST.

SINGAPORE, Dec. 17.
It is feared that 33 lives have been
lost through a mine ruption at
Billion.

MEDICINE DEALERS.

CHINESE ORGANIZATION.

FIRST MEETING HELD.

The Hongkong Chinese Association
of Medicine Dealers held its first
meeting at the Tai Ping Theatre on
Thursday. Mr. Tong Shoo-shan
presided. The meeting was well
attended.

The notice convening the meeting
having been read, Mr. Li Wing-kwong,
Chairman of the Tung Wah Hospital,
conducted the opening ceremony in
behalf of the Association.

Following this the Chairman made
an address. He said: On behalf of
the Association, I want to say a few
words about its aims. To-day may be
regarded as this Association's birth-
day. The object of this Association
is mainly to cement the relations
between the employers and employees
of the Medicine Guild, to help mem-
bers, to transact good for the com-
munity, to study the medicine of
various countries and to distinguish
therefrom the real and the imitation
and the high from the low-grades,
to improve methods of manufacture,
to promote health for the protection
of the lives of the people and to extend
the market for medicines. The Asso-
ciation intends to gradually extend
its influence by organising a news-
paper for the unification of medicine
dealers, raising capital for the pro-
motion of manufacturing medicines
and extending the market for their
sale, and uniting the Western and
Chinese sciences of medicine. There
is an old saying that knowledge is
not difficult but action is.

Mr. Yee Sang-fat, however, reverses
the idea and says that action is
not difficult but knowledge is.

Both ideas are logical, but from my
point of view, I dare say that knowl-
edge is in fact, not often to be found
as easy as action. If you want to
know a thing, you have to acquire
wisdom and if you want to do a
thing properly, you must do it accord-
ing to virtue. Knowledge and action
must go hand in hand. The one
cannot do without the other. We must
therefore maintain the knowledge
and virtues of the members of this
Association and stick to our purpose
with perseverance to effectually carry
out the principles of mutual help.
(Applause). We must wash away all
appearance of being like so much
scattered sand and do all we can to
promote the spirit of patriotism. As
this Association is at its infancy,
everything is not complete. It is
just like a child learning to walk.
It is, however, fortunate, that you,
gentlemen, have honoured it to-
day with your presence and we
earnestly hope that you will favour
us with your advice for its direction
from time to time in the same man-
ner as an elder brother teaches a
younger one. As the people of the
Republic must always be friendly to
each other, should it not be more so
with us merchants and particularly
employers and employees, to sacrifice
our selfish opinions for the promo-
tion of mutual benefit and help?
(Applause).

Other speakers followed, wishing
success to the Association.

(Applause).

(Applause).

(Applause).

(Applause).

(Applause).

(Applause).

(Applause).

(Applause).

(Applause).

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(Applause).

(Applause).

(Applause).

(Applause).

(Applause).

brightly decorated with flags and ever-
greens. Long before 4 o'clock, the
hour set for the ceremony, the place
was crowded with Portuguese and
English residents. The Union Jack
and the Portuguese flag were display-
ed at the entrance, and a carpeted
gangway led to the platform. The
band of the Wiltshire Regiment was
in attendance and played during the
proceedings.

Very shortly after 4 o'clock, the
British and Portuguese national an-
them announced the arrival of His
Excellency the Governor of Hong-
kong, Sir R. E. Stubbs, accompanied
by Lady Stubbs and Captain McGrath,
and His Excellency Henrique Mon-
teiro Correa da Silva, the Governor
of Macao.

Among the guests were Sir Robert Ho
Tung, Major-General F. Ventris, the Bishop
of Victoria, the Hon. Mr. W. Chatham,
C.M.G., the Hon. Mr. H. P. Holroyd,
the Hon. Mr. A. G. M. Fletcher, the Hon. Mr.
J. H. Kemp, the Hon. Mr. P. F. Fox,
Senhor de Albuquerque (Portuguese
Consul), the Consul and Vice-Consul for
Peru, the Consul for Mexico and Senor
P. V. Costa, Acting-Consul for Brazil.
The President of the Club, Mr. A. F. B.
Silva-Neto, in introducing the Governor
of Macao, said: "Your Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen, To-day is the 54th
anniversary of the inauguration of the
old Club Lusitano building, which was then
one of the most important events to the
Portuguese community in this Colony."

After their respective speeches, the
Governor of Macao, the Governor of
Victoria, the Hon. Mr. W. Chatham,
C.M.G., the Hon. Mr. H. P. Holroyd,
the Hon. Mr. A. G. M. Fletcher, the Hon. Mr.
J. H. Kemp, the Hon. Mr. P. F. Fox,
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Portuguese community in this Colony."

When Jose Rodrigues Coelho do Amaral
Lusitano, when this distinguished Governor
laid the foundation stone of our first building
and in a very patriotic
speech expressed a wish that the act of
performing this duty should be the pre-
lude to the cooperation of the Portu-
guese with the British in the work which
was being carried on here by Great Britain
in furthering Western civilization. As it
is to-day, two Governors of these friendly
nations honoured the Portuguese community
on the occasion of the laying of the foundation
stone of the first Club building, thus stimu-
lating the energy and patriotism of our
forefathers in such a manner that the work
initiated by them 54 years ago remains today
as fresh and as consistent, and this is proved
by the ceremony which is being performed
to-day.

His Excellency the Governor of Macao
thanked the Governor of Hongkong for the
complimentary reference to himself and the
British community. He said it was a pleasure
for him to assist in a function such as the present,
that represented a marked step forward in
the progress of the Portuguese in this
Colony. It was with pleasure that he
remembered the friendly relations that had
existed between Great Britain and Portugal
for the past six centuries, and he
hoped that the understanding that had
come with such long friendship would
endure and grow more intimate in the
future. (Applause). He wished the Club
every success and expressed the wish that
it would be of the greatest benefit to the
Portuguese community. (Applause).

His Excellency the Governor of Macao
then laid the foundation stone which bore
the following inscription:
"1866-1920. A pedra fundamental
d'este novo edificio do Club Lusitano foi
colocada em 17 de Dezembro de 1920 por
Sua Excelencia a Governador de Macao,
Senhor Henrique Monteiro Correa da
Silva, Cavalleiro da Ordem de Marinha,
Cavalleiro da Ordem da Torre e Espada,
Cruz de Guerra da classe D.S.O., com
a comprehensao de Sua Excelencia o
Governador de Hongkong Sir Reginald
Stubbs, K.C.M.G."

The Governor of Macao then presented
the autographs of the principal guests,
bank notes and the daily newspapers.

RECEPTION AT HONGKONG
HOTEL.

After the function at the Club site, the
guests adjourned to the Hongkong Hotel
where the Committee of the Club held a
reception in honour of their Excellencies.
After refreshments, there was dancing.

THE NEW CLUB.

The new Club will be constructed entirely
of concrete with ornamental moldings on
the outer walls. It is situated in a very
central position running through from Ice
House Street to Duddell Street. Owing to
the contour of the land the Ice House Street
frontage will have only three stories, while
that in Duddell Street will present four.
The site covers an area of some 25,500
square feet, and the height of the building
will be 75 feet. The design was prepared
by the late Mr. E. E. Rosser and is now
in the hands of Mr. A. G. Hewlett. The
specifications provide for the main
entrance to be in Ice House Street. The
basement will in all likelihood be used as
a bank. The ground floor accommodation
provides for a vestibule, entrance hall,
grand staircase, one large billiard room
(33' 6" x 27' 0"), one small billiard
room (27' 0" x 17' 0"), reading room (27' 0"
x 15' 0"), bar (33' 6" x 17' 0"), Secretary's
Office, servants' rooms, lavatories, etc. The
accommodation on the first floor comprises
dining hall (37' 0" x 27' 0"), library (34' 6"
x 27' 0"), retiring or tea room (18' 0" x
15' 0"), card room (34' 6" x 15' 0"), servants'
rooms, etc. A wide verandah has also been
provided. Between the first and second
floors a Mezzanine floor will be built in
which will be housed the kitchen, pantry,
and additional servants' accommodation.
On the second floor a spacious hall room
has been provided, at one end of which
will be a stage (30' 0" x 18' 0") with
ladies' and gentlemen's retiring rooms on
each side. Ladies' cloak and dressing rooms
have been provided and also cloak rooms
for gentlemen. The size of the hall room
will be 58' 0" x 27' 0", giving a floor area
of 1,566 square feet for dancing. The
verandah along the whole front of the hall
room will give added accommodation. The
hall room will have a carved ceiling, richly
decorated and moulded throughout, and the
floor will be specially designed and con-
structed for dancing. The grand staircase
of the building will be of fire-proof con-
struction, enclosed in polished teak, with
handrails wrought from balustrading. All
internal walls and ceilings will be finished
in plaster with enrichments and panellings,
while the walls of the hall room will have
pilasters with moulded caps and bases, the
floor of the verandah, entrance hall,
etc., will be covered with a design of
English tiles.

ERRIER-TELEGRAMS.

(Routier's Service to the China Mail.)

SUPPLEMENTARY ARMY ESTIMATES.

London, December 16th.
In the House of Commons, the Supple-
mentary Army Estimates were passed.

CHINA IN LEAGUE COUNCIL.

Geneva, December 16th.
China has obtained a place as a per-
manent member of the Council of the
League.

BRITISH PROPAGANDA IN CHINA.

London, December 16th.
A great authority on the Chinese and
British trade, interviewed by the Daily
Mail, gave it as his opinion that it was
of vital importance to attract more
Chinese students to England, if
British exports to China were to
be maintained on the old footing
of supremacy. If we neglected the most
obvious way of strengthening Chinese
sympathies, we were certain to be
thrust aside. The importance of the
Chinese market was growing rapidly.

ANTI-JAPANESE AGITATION.

New York, December 16th.
Judge Gary, head of the United States
Steel Corporation, in a speech at the
Japan Society, denounced "the vicious,
deliberate effort to stir up trouble be-
tween Japan and the United States."
He said that if the two nations clashed
the Americans would be more blame-
worthy than the Japanese. He trusted
the honesty and integrity of Japan, and
declared that Japan was building a navy
as the last defence against an attack
without reason. Judge Gary emphasised
the fact that no other country was spend-
ing so much money on warships as the
United States, and declared that the
Japanese desired intimate friendship
with the United States.

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BUSINESS NOTICES

GIFTS WORTH THE GIVING

Are to be obtained at
SHAW'S. The high class Men's
Wear House. The selection
is Absolutely Unrivalled and
Everything Bears the hall
mark of



J. T. SHAW
SPECIALIST IN MEN'S WEAR
692, NEXT DOOR HONGKONG HOTEL, 692.

WE NOW HAVE LARGE SUPPLIES OF

BEE TLE VIRUS.

HARMLESS TO DOMESTIC ANIMALS, SAFE AND
CLEANLY TO USE, BUT MOST EFFECTIVE IN THE
EXTERMINATION OF COCKROACHES

OBTAINABLE FROM

THE PHARMACY
FLETCHER & CO. 22, QUEEN'S ROAD.

THE GENERAL ELECTRIC Co. (of China), Ltd.

QUEEN'S BUILDINGS, HONGKONG.

Telegrams: "Sparkless" Telephone 518

HEAD OFFICE: SHANGHAI.

(BRANCHES AT HANKOW, DAIREN AND
TIENTSIN.)

Representatives Throughout China for and affiliated with
THE GENERAL ELECTRIC CO., LTD., LONDON.
Whitton Engineering Works, Birmingham.
(Electrical Plant, Motors, dynamos, Switch Gears, etc.)
Graham & Co. Ltd., London.
(Wire and Cable Works, Lamps, Radiator Lamps)
Fraser & Chalmers Engineering Works, Ltd., Perth.
(Electric Locomotives, Gas Engines and Motors, Pumps)
Firth-Cotton Cable Works, Southampton.
(Cable, Wire, Rope, etc., Insulating Materials, Tapes).
Chamberlain & Hockham, Ltd., Birmingham.
(Motors for Home Service, Power and Traction Purposes).
Salisbury Electrical Co., Ltd., Manchester.
(Electrical Locomotives of All Descriptions).
Firth-Cotton Cable Works, Ltd., Coventry.
(Complete Telephone Installations, Switch Board, Telephones).
Comer Magnetics & Ignition Co., Ltd., Coventry.
(Generator for Cars and Automobiles).
Barnes Ltd., Ltd., London.
(Electric Powering in Cable Lites).
Fraser & Chalmers Engineering Works, Birmingham.
(Electrical Plant, Small power Motors, Carbon Brushes).
Art Metal and Steel Castings Works, Birmingham.
(Machine Tools, Steel Castings and Accessories).
LARGE STOCKS CARRIED IN CHINA OF ALL ELECTRICAL MATERIALS
AND ELECTRICAL MACHINERY.

Mr. Arthur C. Dias has arrived from London with a large consignment
of all the latest materials including-Black and Blue Coatings
Overcoatings-Fancy Worsted and Tweed Suitings-Flannels-
Beal Harris-Beal Shetlands-Brinaghs-Cymenans-Donagals
Sunproof (Solar)-&c.

We guarantee West End cut and fit.

DISS BROS.,

Alexandra Buildings

DONNELLY & WHYTE

WINE MERCHANTS.

Tel. 638. Tel. 639.

HANDLEY PAG

MULTIPLE ENGINED BIPLANES

HANDLEY PAGE LTD.

Orickwood, London, N.W. 2

Sole Agents for China

PEKING SYNDICATE LTD.

Sub-Agents for Hongkong and South China

W. R. LOXLEY & CO.

LAMMERT BROS.

AUCTIONEERS, APPRAISERS
AND SURVEYORS.

Public Auctions.

THE Undersigned have received instructions to sell by Public Auction,

TUESDAY, December 21, 1920.

Commencing at 11 a.m.

at their Sales Rooms, Duddell Street.

A Consignment of High Class

Ladies' and Gent's Boots

and Shoes

And

A Selection of Ladies' Costumes,

Dresses, Cloaks in Silk and other

materials (from Paris).

Cash on delivery.

LAMMERT BROS.

Auctioneers.

on

WEDNESDAY, December 22, 1920,

commencing at 12 o'clock (noon)

at their Sales Rooms, Duddell Street.

25 cases Heideck Extra Dry Cham-

pagne, (12).

15 cases Duc de Monaco Champagne,

(12).

50 cases Salamander Brand,

500 cases Salamander Brand, No. 1.

34 cases Australian Rock,

44 cases Old Tom Gin,

16 cases French Vermouth,

(in lots to suit all purchasers).

On view now.

Terms:—Cash on delivery.

LAMMERT BROS.

Auctioneers.

Hongkong, December 18, 1920.

FOR SALE

MILNER'S SAFES

Apply to

LAMMERT BROS.

Duddell Street.

MASSAGE.

Mr. HONDA and Mrs. HONDA.

Trained male Masseurs.

15 years' experience.

Security of Tokyo Military Hospital.

WILL VISIT PATIENTS

RESIDENCES IF REFERRED

No. 24 Wyndham Street

(Opposite to the China Mail.)

INTIMATIONS

YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO
BE WITHOUT THEM.

JUST received a large Consignment of (1) LACTOGEN the most digestive food for Infants which keeps good in quality during Hot weather (2) LACTOSE (Milk Sugar) for sweetening the foods of Infants and Dyspeptics (3) MILFORD-McGRATH FLUID INSECTICIDE the Best Fluid for destroying Fleas, Mosquitoes, Bugs, Flies and all other Insect Pests in Summer days, and (4) JOEY CABBIES' GOLDEN FLEECE MAGIC and CINDERELLA SOAPS for keeping everything clean in Houses.

PRICES are Very Moderate. Inspection and Enquiries are cordially invited.

SHIU FUNG TAI & CO.,

Sole Agents for Hongkong and South China.

Nos. 6 & 8, Connaught Road Central, Hongkong.

Telephone Nos. 128.

理代泰豐

Xmas Presents

Stamps, Albums,

Lucky Baskets,

and

Toys,

at cheap prices.

Inspection invited.

GRACA & CO.,

DEALERS IN RELIGIOUS BOOKS, TOYS,

PHILATELIC GOODS, SEEDS, &c.,

No. 10, Wyndham Street,

H.O. Box 620. Hongkong.

D.J. Collis Browne's

Chlorodyne

THE ORIGINAL AND ONLY GENUINE.

DIARRHOEA, and is the only

Specific in CHOLERA and

DYSENTERY.

Chlorodyne is a liquid taken in drops, graduated according to the malady. It invariably

relieves pain of whatever kind; creates a calm refreshing sleep; allays irritation

of the nervous system when all other remedies fail; leaves no bad effects;

and can be taken when no other medicine can be tolerated.

CONVINCING MEDICAL TESTIMONY WITH EACH BOTTLE.

New Genuine without the words Dr. J. Collis Browne's Chlorodyne on the Label.

Sold by all Chemists.

Price in England,

1/11, 2/8, 4/6.

FEVER, CROUP, AGUE.

The best Remedy known for

COUGHS, COLDS,

ASTHMA, BRONCHITIS.

The only Remedy for

NEURALGIA, GOUT, RHEUMATISM.

Sole Manufacturers:

T. T. DAVENPORT, Ltd.,

London, S.E.

C & B TABLE DELICACIES

NOTHING FINER—BOTTLED OR CANNED.

The first requisites with CROSSE & BLACKWELL

Delicacies are Quality, Purity and Freshness.

30 Varieties of SOUPS, 15 Varieties of POTTED MEATS,

OXFORD SAUSAGES, OATMEAL, OLDS, VINEGAR & TINNED FISH.

CROSSE & BLACKWELL

Sole Agents for Hongkong and South China

BY APPOINTMENT

EARLIER TELEGRAMS.

(Reuter's Service to the China Mail.)

M.C.C. TOUR.

STONEY, December 15th.

In the match between the New South

Wales Colts and the M.C.C., the former

scored 84 runs in the first innings, Wad-

dington taking 8 wickets for 33.

The M.C.C. scored 702 in their first

essay, Hearn contributing 144 and

Hendren 211.

The Colts, in their second innings,

made 148 runs for 4 wickets.

The match ended in a draw.

GERMAN CABLES DISPUTE.

NEW YORK, December 15th.

The State Department states that the

modus vivendi regarding the ex-German

cable negotiations was discovered and

approved unanimously. It is therefore,

appears that France has also agreed to

the arrangement.

NORWAY RAILWAY STRIKE.

CHRISTIANIA, December 15th.

The railway strike has come to an end.

The men have completely capitulated.

JAPANESE IN VLADIVOSTOK.

LONDON, December 15th.

The Japanese Embassy has issued a

statement regarding the situation in

Vladivostok which concludes by declar-

ing that, apart from the political ques-

tions arising from the Bolshevik develop-

ments, Japan has important commercial

interests in Vladivostok which she can-

not leave to the tender mercies of an

avowedly Bolshevik regime.

ALLEGED B.M.B. SLAVERY.

LONDON, December 15th.

The Colonial Office has issued a White

Paper dealing with the Anti-Slavery

Society's allegations against the Ad-

ministration of the British North Borneo

Company, containing the report of Sir

West Ridgeway and the Hon. Mountstuart

Elphinstone denouncing the society and

finding all the charges as untrue.

Lord Milner expresses gratification at

the fact that the charges have been satis-

factorily met.

CHINA RELIEF FUND APPEAL.

LONDON, December 16th.

At the special appeal made on behalf

of the China Famine Fund on the occa-

sion of the meeting at the Mansion

House, the Lord Mayor presiding, many

distinguished people were present, in-

cluding Sir John Jordan, Sir Charles

Addis, the Chinese Minister, and Mr.

F. P. Anderson.

Mr. Sze paid a tribute to the help

already given by Great Britain. Never-

theless, he said, they will have fifteen or

sixteen million people suffering from

starvation before Spring. Large sums

are still urgently needed.

Several large donations were an-

nounced.

PARIS, December 16th.

A big entertainment has been arranged

here in aid of the Chinese Famine

Funds. The programme is exclusively

Chinese, including theatricals and con-

juring.

NEW CABLES TO CHINA AND JAPAN.

WASHINGTON, December 16th.

Mr. Carlton, President of the Western

Union, has informed the Senate Com-

mittee that the company's cable from

Barbados, which it was originally desired

to land at Miami, Florida, will be con-

nected with the United States, and Cuba,

despite the opposition of the American

Government, which had notified that it

would take the necessary steps to pre-

vent such a connection.

Mr. Carlton stated that he had the

plans for direct cables via the

Atlantic Islands, to Japan and China.

"I have the assurance," he said, "of

the British authorities that there would

be no trouble in landing in China."

OLD TIBET.

MYSTERIES REVEALED.

"FOSSIL NATION'S" ODD JEWELLERY.

J. H. Davis in a Bulletin of the

American Museum of Natural History.

Out of Tibet the secret, remote

and forbidding, there has come to

us a treasure-trove to which clings

an atmosphere of oriental mystery

and barbarism.

Often before, missionaries returning

from far-off countries have

brought back costumes, weapons and

implements which have thrown

light on the customs and culture

of the people who had made

them. And now again a missionary

—the Rev. H. B. Marx, for sixteen

years attached to a Moravian mission

on the Indian side of the Tibetan

border—brings such a collection.

Through funds provided by J. P.

Morgan, the collection has been ob-

tained for the American Museum of

Natural History in New York City

and has already been placed on

exhibition.

There are more than two hundred

and thirty pieces in the new Tibetan

collection, and they cover every

phase of the life of Tibet. There are

native costumes—the men's consist-

ing of a small hat trimmed with

artificial flowers, long woollen gown,

shawl and belt, coarse woollen trou-

sers and shoes with heavily felted

soles. The women's civil dress is

much the same, but includes great

brass pins, and silver filigree

ornaments set with turquoise and

coral.

TIBETAN JEWELLERY.

There are large earrings and finger

rings also of silver and set with tur-

quoise. Necklaces made of very

large beads of amber, coral and

A. S. WATSON & CO., LTD.,
Established 80 Years.

“XMAS IS COMING.”
POWELL’S.
XMAS BAZAAR AND FANCY DEPT.,
Is now replete with a well selected variety of
USEFUL
INEXPENSIVE
AND
ATTRACTIVE TOYS
AND GIFTS.

F. W. D. Automotive Service Department,
60, Des Voeux Road Central.

With regard to last week's talk of "booting me out of the colony," I have received an explanation and apology. I am assured the dire threat was made only one small group, and that they are "asses who should not be killed." These lads, who count on doing the square thing by Mr. Holyoak, assure me that a man would be got up to keep away if I threatened to go away. They say "Hongkong without Maria would be awful." And they tell me something I did not know. They say that Mr. Holyoak made the same objection to the isolated table of civilization at the armistice dinner. He stood against it the moment it was put out, but was assured that the Hastings had so arranged it that the men that the men would not go. Well. That also is false, but it does not bring me closer to the conviction that the men in Hongkong are as good as dead as Mr. Holyoak is. There is no need to say more about it.

Bad work condemns it-
it is necessary to drag it
to light publicly, except in
its may be of help to the
For "good work" read
vice," and for "bad work,"
vice," and you have an
which would silence the
This letter was written,
the interests of art, but of
vanity. That is quite evi-
Where an amateur is a true
(in the derivative sense of
d) a ruthless pointing out
and failures must be help-
where self-love is the only
concerned, such criticism is
way to kill it. Where
is impossible, the criti-
must quit. This letter,

[illegible]

KING (Gilbert Cannan's
FOD: "Release of the
Soul," a queer essay
tating the catastrophic effect
World War on a sensitive
ation. Towards the end he
Speech is so debased that
written word can carry but
meaning; the poets matter
things but they cannot sign-
the scientists are inarticulate
engineers without guid-
the fearful powers at their
to lay waste both the earth
man life, while the mass of
ple labour and stumbles be-
the weight of the questions
tating in their unillumina-
maris and minds. The jour-
alis-to-the, the novelists

TONGUE
To-
Compa
highly
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piece c
Last
present
Stay."
witty p
none o
has dis
product

tion of "Ediz Comes, to a charming comedy from the pen of H. V. Esmond, lacked that artistry and finish which distinguished all the excellent productions submitted by these

Chinese, aged 5 years, has
sent to the Government Civil
l, with injuries to the head
by being knocked down

CHASE AT YAUMATI

Magistrate Orme had before him at the Magistry this morning a Chinese charged with the theft of a wristlet, taken from a shop in Shanghai Street, Yaumati. Defendant went into the shop and took up the watch. In order to examine it he stepped into the street and then bolted. He was arrested after a chase by the shopkeepers. He told the Magistrate that he was examining the watch and Orme, hearing a commotion outside, put it back on the counter. It dropped to the floor and when he went outside the shop people chased him, wanting to recover the damage that had been done in the fall. A fine of \$50 was imposed, with the alternative of a month's imprisonment.

WARWICK COMEDY CO.

TO-NIGHT'S FAREWELL ATTRACTION

To-night the "Warwick Comedy"

highly successful season in

Hongkong by the second
presentation of "Uncle Ned."

a delightful comedy which made a more than favourable impression on

for a farewell attraction a happier

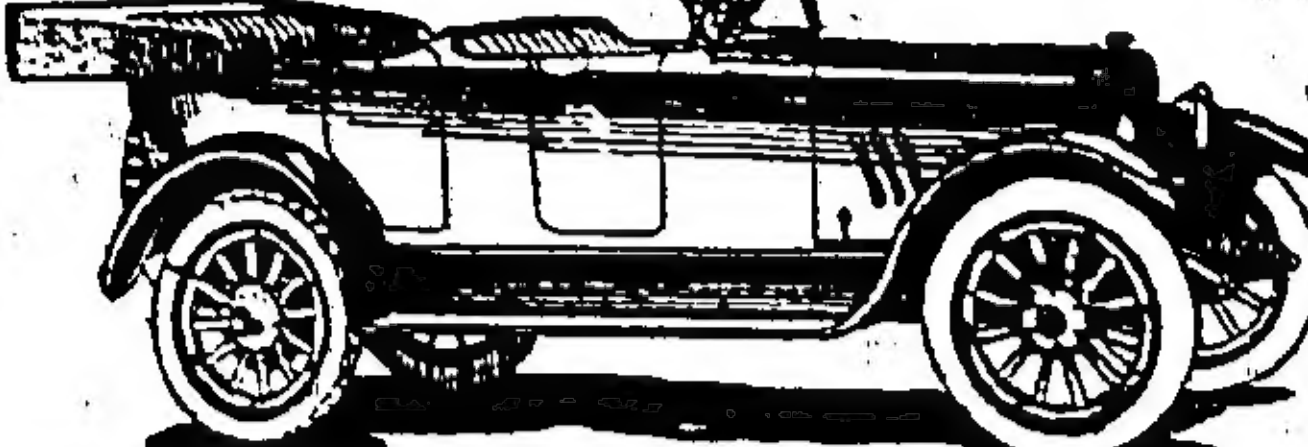
Last night the Company's second

stay," a charming comedy from the

none of that artistry and finish which

productions submitted by these

MEROUBY MOTOR CAR CO.
19-41 Des Voeux Road Central, HONGKONG.



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TELEPHONE
GENERAL OFFICE 1248
ALICE BLANCH & 1 57
SHOW ROOM
ROSWAY ROAD, 1283
BLANCH & 1 57
WEST POINT BLANCH 1240
WALK EAST 1232

SCOTS PLATOON.

RECRUITING MEETING.

COMMITTEE CHOSEN.

For the purpose of discussing recruiting for the unit, a meeting of the Scottish Platoon of the Hongkong Volunteer Defence Corps was held at the Volunteer headquarters yesterday afternoon. It was well attended. The Hon. Mr. John Johnston presided, supported by Major L. G. Bird and Mr. J. M. Gordon.

The Chairman said: Gentlemen, I accept your invitation to preside at this meeting with considerable diffidence, for two reasons. The first, because I am about to leave the Colony. The second, because it strikes me as rather inappropriate that I, who have only volunteer service, should be addressing you who have experience—most of you—of the "real thing."

However, I suppose I have some right this year to address a representative gathering of Scotsmen, and I will therefore endeavour to do my best.

To commence with, I have some experience of volunteering, commencing with the "Eton Dogshooters," where I blew a bugle—very badly; thereafter in Hongkong and Shanghai, both in the ranks—as a trooper in the S.L.H., and as a somewhat indifferent officer in command of the Mounted Section of the Scots Company in Hongkong in 1910-11, I think.

From the administrative side also I claim some experience, because whilst serving as a Trooper in the Light Horse I was at the same time on the Watch Committee in Shanghai, which Committee is responsible for Police, Fire Brigade, and Volunteer matters.

Reports where there is no Garrison or Navy, as was the case till very lately in the North, and where there is a large native population—mostly very law-abiding I will admit, but possessing, as all other large communities must do, peculiar characters to start a riot and a father of a row when they get going—the volunteer has ample opportunity to see and judge for himself of what value his services are to the community.

The occasional risk of stopping with your head or other part of your body, some household article of a useful, but unornamental nature—hurled by an infuriated old lady from her bedroom window, or of doing patrol work armed to the teeth and with live ammunition, serves but to keep up your interest as a volunteer.

It is different in a place like this, where you have a large Garrison and equally large Navy always in evidence, and a volunteer is apt to ask himself—I will frankly admit to having done so myself—"Of what use am I with all these soldiers and sailors about?"

Prior to 1914, gentlemen, that question required a lot of answering. Nowadays, however, it does not. Experience has shown that given the training the civilian can go anywhere the professional leads.

It has also been shown that the exigencies of one situation may require the withdrawal of most of the personnel of both the Services and the protection of this Colony would again fall to your lot.

It is a sweat—and there's dashed little honour and glory working a searchlight by night and doing your work in the office next day, but one fact remains that the authorities require a Volunteer Defence Corps, and there is always the chance of something out of the ordinary turning up.

The Singapore Volunteers certainly never anticipated trouble in the direction from which it came.

Scotsmen are by nature clannish; the further they get away from home the more closely do they hang together, and here is the best of opportunities of drawing a wee bit closer the bonds of good fellowship, which unite us all and for which we are proverbial the world over.

The addition of a "Kilted" Company to any body of volunteers immediately raises the standard of the whole corps, because an example of good fellowship and esprit de corps is set by a Scottish company which few can equal and none can excel.

Now, gentlemen, Scottish companies exist in the Volunteer Corps of Calcutta, Colombo, Singapore, Hongkong and Shanghai, and I am prepared to wager that their records are the best; moreover, that the authorities would do anything in reason to preserve and keep them going as a "Kilted" Company.

To be of the greatest value, however, a minimum of 100 men is

required, and this is what I understand this meeting has been called to consider.

I am talking off the book, but I think I can safely say that our local Government will be no less anxious to meet you in the provision of officers, N.C.O.'s, equipment, etc., etc., than the Governments in the other places I have just mentioned.

It must be remembered, however, that establishment charges mount up, and only the provision of a thoroughly efficient body of men will justify the expenditure on equipment alone.

There are enough Scotsmen in Hongkong to make a Scottish Company—in work or play. "Second to none," which you will remember is the motto of one of Scotland's most famous regiments, "The Greys." Further, and that which is of great importance, you have the foundation of a really good Pipe Band, which will be the envy of all the other companies who—whatever rude remarks they may make about our music—are, and will be only too pleased to march to it.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I wish the Hongkong Scottish every success, and may this Company be the means of cementing many friendships for those serving in it "frae North o' Tweed."

Mr. Gordon said that there were 51 men in the Scottish platoon, which was too small a number, as there were about 300 Scots of military age in the Colony. The Government had been very good towards the Scottish Platoon and had given them all possible assistance. If they succeeded in forming a company of 100 men they could run a football team and a Pipe Band. The present membership was not the required strength, as not all of them could turn up at parades, drills, etc. They expected to have a Scottish Company similar to that of Shanghai, the efficiency of which should be followed by the platoon. He was sure that some men would say that they had done enough during the war, and he wished to assure these men that the work of the members consisted of tea drills, three days camp and a musketry course which occupied about three afternoons in the winter. He was sure that this would not be excessive work for any of the members. The St. Andrew's Society and the H.K.V.D.C. had promised their support and the best thing to do, it seemed to him, was to form a recruiting committee in order to boost the thing along. The full equipment, including the kilts, for 100 men, was expected to arrive at any moment.

A speaker said that there were two ways to do recruiting, to appeal to local Scots individually to join the Company, or to do the recruiting as a Company. When the full equipment arrived the Pipers could give church parades to induce more Scots to join.

Mr. T. W. Hill expressed the opinion that a certain amount of prejudice against joining the Scottish Section existed among the people in the Dock Companies. During the war volunteers complained of having been badly treated, such as doing long duty at Lyemien, etc., but as the war was all over, and the Corps had been recognized, he thought this prejudice should be removed. Representatives of the Talkoo and Kowloon Docks denied that they had any prejudice, the latter saying that the men of his Dock were sometimes kept away from parade and other duty by their work.

Major Bird said that there would be no difficulty for the men employed in the Kowloon Docks to parade on that side, so that they would not have to come over to Hongkong. Arrangements would be made to send the instructors over to Kowloon.

The following were appointed to serve on the recruiting committee: Messrs. G. Duncan, J. B. Ross, D. G. Nicholl, T. W. Hill, W. Budge and F. Soutar.

The Colony returns a clean bill of health so far as notifiable disease is concerned, for the twenty-four hours ending yesterday.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE.
His Excellency Senhor Correia da Silva, B.A.O. Governor of Macao, and Madame de Silva accompanied by Lieutenant F. Chedda, A.D.C. are staying at Government House as the guests of His Excellency and Lady Stubbs.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.
A CLEAN SHEET.

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GOVERNOR OF MACAO.

RECEPTION IN HONGKONG.

TO-DAY'S FUNCTIONS.

His Excellency Senhor Henrique Monteiro Correa da Silva, Governor of Macao, accompanied by Lady Correa da Silva, who arrived yesterday on the Portuguese gunboat "Patria," are the guests of honour of the Portuguese community at a luncheon at the Hongkong Hotel to-day, and at a garden party this afternoon, at the Club de Recreio.

His Excellency and Lady da Silva are staying at Government House, the guests of His Excellency the Governor of Hongkong, Sir Reginald Stubbs, and Lady Stubbs.

On the arrival of the "Patria" with its distinguished passengers, the usual naval salutes were exchanged. A deputation comprising members of the Reception Committee, headed by the Portuguese Consul, Senhor Cereira de Albuquerque Castro, boarded the warship to receive the Governor, Captain McGrath, A. D. C. to the Governor of Hongkong, also went on board and escorted the visitors to Government House.

Yesterday afternoon the Governor of Macao laid the foundation stone of the new Lusitano Club in Ice House Street—which was the principal object of his visit to Hongkong—and attended a reception at the Hongkong Hotel. In the evening there was a dinner at Government House.

The Governor of Macao has a distinguished record. He is the son of the late Conde de Paço d'Arcos. While serving as a Lieutenant in the Portuguese Navy he received the decoration of *Torre e Spada*, given for great valour only, for saving a pinnace after being stranded for seven days off the coast of Africa. He was for some years Governor of Mossamedes and was so successful an administrator that he was selected to be Governor of Macao. During the war he was in command of the gunboat "Ivo" and saw four years of active service, during which he had several encounters with enemy submarines and successfully convoyed and saved several British ships, for which service he received the Distinguished Service Order from the British Government.

MORE FIRES.

TWO CALLS LAST NIGHT.

The Fire Brigade is having a busy time. Last night at about 9 p.m. there was another outbreak in the North Point district, a marsh in which about a hundred coodies were sleeping at Tassernui being destroyed. Other marshes close by were saved through the efforts of the brigade. No lives were lost but most of the personal effects of the men occupying the shed were destroyed.

The Kowloon Fire Brigade attended a fire which broke out at 2 o'clock this morning at 310, Canton Road, Yau-mai. A quantity of bamboo ware belonging to Yu Lai Chi firm of Des Voeux Road, was destroyed. The extent of the damage is not known.

A POLICE RAID.

ARMED MEN ARRESTED.

Four men, who were in conference at the Mi Heung tea shop, in Recreation Street, Yau-mai, were arrested by Inspector Caygill, who raided the place last night, accompanied by Sub-Inspector Ogg and some Chinese officers. When the men were searched one was found to be carrying a revolver and another a dagger and a razor.

TO-NIGHT & TO-MORROW are BAND NIGHTS at THE CORONET

Specialty Augmented Orchestra

Excellent Picture Programme

WILLIAM DESMOND

"A BROADWAY COWBOY"

"SHUB" POLLARD

"CALLA TAXI"

November, begins at Home in THE CORONET REVIEW

Ring up 1743 NOW and make sure of your seat!

TO-DAY'S ADVERTISEMENTS.

NOTICE.

THE CHRISTMAS TREAT (under the auspices of the Catholic Club) to the pensioners under the care of the St. Vincent de Paul Society will be held at the Club House, Glebe, on SUNDAY, 19 December, at 3 p.m.

Subscribers and friends are cordially invited.

Total subscription received, 1919 \$371.50

Amount expended 336.52

Balance C/F to 1920 34.98

J. D. OSMUND,

President

Hongkong, December 17, 1920.

XMAS SHOPPING.

OUR STORE will remain open until 6 P.M., daily from the 20th to the 24th inst for the convenience of our customers.

MACKINTOSH & CO. LTD.

Hongkong, December 17, 1920.

HONGKONG THEATRE

MARY PICKFORD

IN

"REBECCA OF SUNNY BROOK FARM"

In 6 parts

Produced by ARTCRAFT PICTURES CORPORATION.

Directed by MARSHALL NEILAN.

Rebecca Randall Mary Pickford.

Adam Ladd Eugene O'Brien.

etc., etc.

SYNOPSIS.

Rebecca Randall and her large family of brothers and sisters live at Sunnybrook Farm, which is principally remarkable for the size of the mortgage it carries. The task of taking care of all the children is too much for Mrs. Randall, so finally Rebecca is sent away to her two aunts, Miranda and Jane Sawyer, who are strict New England folk. She agrees to sell soap in aid of a fund to buy a banquet lamp for Rev. Smellie.

Rebecca meets young Adam Ladd and much to her astonishment he purchases enough soap to pay for the banquet lamp. When Rebecca tells him about Mrs. Simpson and her lack of a wedding ring, Adam reaches into his pocket, brings forth his mother's wedding ring and gives it to Rebecca to present to Mrs. Simpson. Owing to his boyish Rebecca thinks that Mr. Ladd is Mr. Aladdin, the hero of the wonderful lamp.

With the children of the village, Rebecca gets up a circus in which she is the bare-back rider, but is routed by Aunt Miranda just as she is doing her most daring stunt.

Rebecca is sent to school, but by her clever verse, disgraces the aunt's family, so they decide to send her to a boarding school. She returns a beautiful girl. Adam's admiration for her has greatly increased, and the fondness for the child has grown into love for the young woman. One of the aunts' asses away, and later Rebecca learns that the railroad has purchased Sunnybrook Farm.

Rebecca has the Simpson family taken care of and all the Randall children well provided for. When everyone else is happy, Adam Ladd reminds her that when a little girl she had told him she intended to marry him when she grew up.

Also showing a Mack Sennett comedy in two parts "That Night" featuring Charles Murray and a bevy of beautiful girls.

INCREASED PRICES.

Saturday, December 18th to 21st.

TO-DAY'S ADVERTISEMENTS.

GOVERNMENT OF PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC MINISTRY FOR THE COLONIES.

DEPARTMENT OF DIPLOMATIC, GEOGRAPHICAL AND NAVAL SERVICE.

"Fangim" ex "Numantis"—
"Damaso" ex "Brisbane"—"India"
ex "Vorwarts"—"Goa" ex "Marion"
ex "Din" ex "Lichtenfels."

It is hereby informed to the Consignees, either of the allied or neutral nations, who had goods on board of the above steamers:

"That according to the terms of the DECREE No. 6993 dated 1st October of the present year, they may put up their claims to recover the balances of sums due to them being proceeds of goods sold or commandeered, which formed parts of shipments of the above steamers, within the period of six months, commencing from the 1st October of the current year.

The claims should be accompanied by the following documents:

(a) Application by the Concerned or by his legal representative.

(b) Certificate of nationality of the Concerned issued by his respective Consul.

(c) Bill of Lading duly countersigned if it is necessary.

(d) Power of Attorney of the Owner of the goods if the claim is not to be filed by himself stating the person to whom the amount due should be paid either in Portuguese or British India.

(e) Discharged and acquitted invoices proving that the cost of the goods has been duly paid to the sellers.

(f) Letter of Guaranty as per terms of the DECREE No. 3,800, dated 28th January of 1918 if it is necessary.

This certificate is only applicable when the payments are to be made under "Bonds," which should be given by the respective Government of the Concerned assuming the responsibility for the payment.

In case the Concerned are not able to appear personally, they should grant Power of Attorney to an individual or firm of well-known standing either in Portuguese or British India for the purpose to sign all the necessary documents relating to the collection of what is due to them.

All the documents above mentioned should be stamped and with their respective translations attached to, under the terms of Portuguese laws, and "vises" by the respective consular authorities.

The Attorneys of the Claimants both in Portuguese and British India must be qualified so that they may be able to solve any difficulties that may be raised during the course of proceedings for default in non-compliance with any legal requirement.

All the claims followed by the way as above mentioned should be forwarded to—

DIRECTOR OF DIPLOMATIC, GEOGRAPHICAL AND NAVAL SERVICE MINISTRY FOR THE COLONIES.

CLAIMS LISBON (PORTUGAL)

Those Consignees who had already presented their claims at the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic in GOA (Portuguese India), and not having yet been accorded with a dispatch for completion of documents or for they having not been legally done, may still be allowed to rectify those faults and irregularities by themselves or by their attorneys within the six months as above stated.

Those Consignees who had taken delivery of their goods under "Bond" or against cash deposit, may—by the sanction of the Office of the Attorney General in GOA (Portuguese India)—recover their deposits or get those "Bonds" cancelled as soon as they are able to produce those legal documents that were short or having complied with the legal formalities required, non-fulfilment thereof was the cause of the requirement of those deposits and "Bonds."

At the expiration of the period of the six months aforesaid, the settlements will be made of those claims legally recognised, in BOMBAY and in GOA, for that purpose notices will be duly published.

DEPARTMENT OF THE DIPLOMATIC, GEOGRAPHICAL AND NAVAL SERVICE FOR THE MINISTRY FOR THE COLONIES in Lisbon, 2nd October, 1920.

(Signed) ERNESTO DE VASCONCELLOS

Capt. M.G.

It is correct

Department of the Diplomatic, Geographical and Naval Service, 2nd October, 1920.

(Signed) PAULO DE MOURA-COUTINHO ALMEIDA

DECA

Capt.

In charge of the Service.

The death took place at Yokohama on Dec. 2 of Captain Walter Edward Pyno in his 76th year.

Captain Pyno was for many years in the service of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha.

NOTICES.

XMAS PRESENTS IN SILVER.

MANICURE SETS, PHOTO FRAMES, VANITY CASES, CARD CASES, CIGARETTE CASES, PUFF BOXES, TRINKET BOXES, FLASKS, SCENT BOTTLES, PHOTO FRAMES, INKSTANDS, CIGAR CUTTERS, SEALING SETS, BRIDGE BOXES, SHAVING SETS, MIRRORS.

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LANE, CRAWFORD & CO.

"BABY" GRAND PIANOS JUST UNPACKED

"BROADWOOD" LONDON.

"CHICKERING" BOSTON.

The Finest in the World.

THE ANDERSON MUSIC CO., LTD.

16, DES VOEUX ROAD. TEL. 1122.

FINE SELECTION OF GOODS SUITABLE FOR XMAS & NEW YEAR PRESENTS.

Including: CUTEX SETS, MANICURE SETS, COLGATE'S GIFT BOXES, ETC. COTY'S & HUGOBON'S PERFUMERY, HAIR BRUSHES & COMBS, PIPES & VACUUM FLASKS, ETC.

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THE "BON TON" LTD.

37, Queen's Road Central.

JUST ARRIVED.

An odd assortment of Ladies' Hats of the latest, French styles and make, no duplicates of any style. Also Evening Dress and Costume Materials and Trimmings, etc.

EXPECTED SHORTLY.

The universal popular BONTON Corsets.

XMAS HAMPERS.

We beg to notify Customers that Assorted Hampers suitable for the festive season may be obtained from us at the following reduced rate.

No. 1 HAMPER.

1 Qt. Moet & Chandon Champagne "Crown Brand"
1 Biscuit Brandy
1 Ft. D.O.M.
1 Qt. Martell's XXX Brandy
2 " King George IV W.L. Whisky or Perfection
1 " Superior Tawny Port
1 " St. Julien Claret
1 " Old Brandy Sherry Red Seal
1 " D.O.L. Old Tom or Dry Gin
1 " Burgoyne's Australian Burgundy
1 phial Pomeroy's Bitters

\$30

No. 2 HAMPER.

1 Qt. Guillet's Champagne
1 Ft. D.O.M.
1 Qt. Burgoyne's Australian Burgundy
1 " Martell's XXX Brandy
1 " King George IV W.L. Whisky or Perfection
2 " Tawny Dry Port
1 " St. Julien Claret
1 " D.O.L. Old Tom or Dry Gin
1 " V.D. de Faste Yellow Seal Sherry
1 phial Pomeroy's Bitters

\$25

No. 3 HAMPER.

1 Qt. Burgoyne's Australian Burgundy
1 Ft. D.O.M.
1 " Martell's XXX Brandy
1 " King George IV W.L. Whisky or Perfection Whisky
2 " Superior Rich Old Port
1 " Burgoyne's XXX Brandy
1 " Montblanc Sherry White Seal
1 " Martell's Claret
1 " D.O.L. Old Tom or Dry Gin
1 phial Pomeroy's Bitters

\$22

Hampers of all descriptions, made up to suit Customers' requirements. **GANDER PRICH & CO., LTD.** TEL. 1134. 5, QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL, HONGKONG.

XMAS GIFT FOR GENTLEMEN

SOME EXCELLENT SUGGESTIONS

KREMENTZ
Correct
JEWELLERY
of Every Description



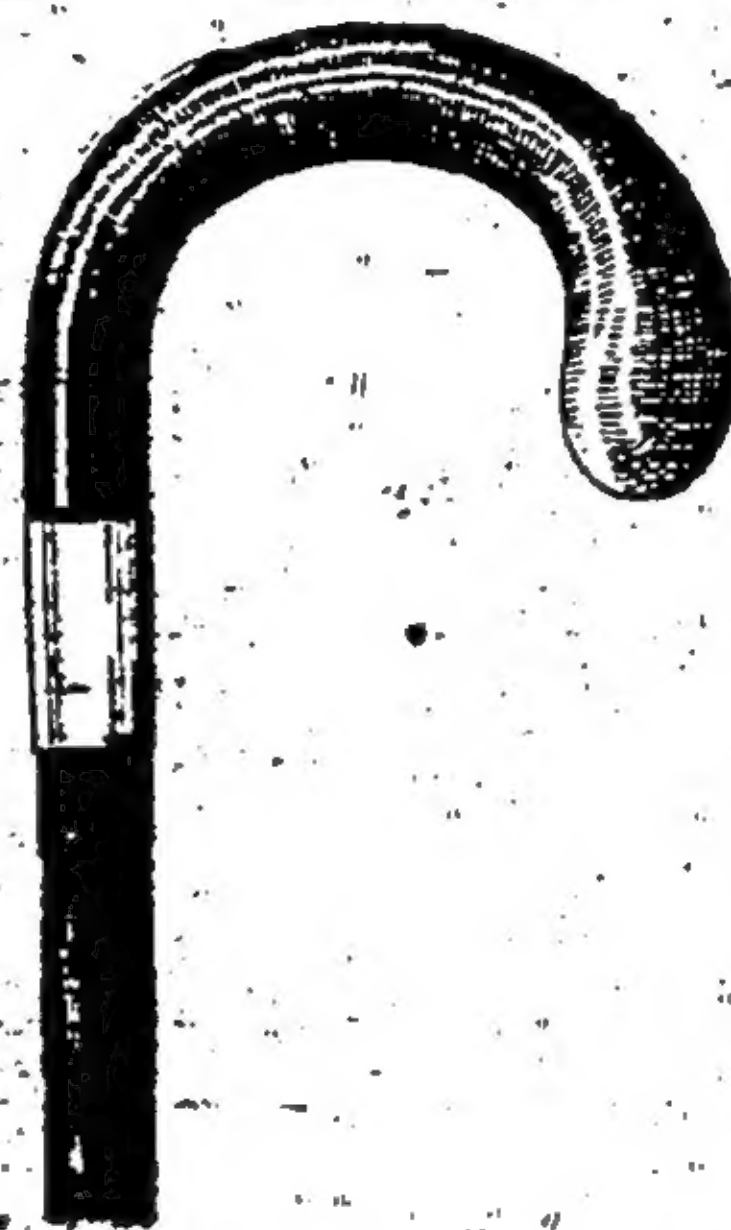
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and
PYJAMAS
in Beautiful Designs

JAEGER PURE WOOL NOVELTIES



Knitted Waistcoats

IN A RANGE OF VERY SMART
STYLES ALSO KNITTED GOLF
JACKETS A LARGE SELECTION
TO CHOOSE FROM.



Walking Sticks

A WONDERFUL VARIETY IN
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"The Cricket on the Hearth"

A SEASONABLE DICKENS' STORY.

A MISUNDERSTANDING BUT A HAPPY END.

CHIRP THE FIRST.

The kettle began it! Don't tell me what Mrs. Peerybingle said. I know better. Mrs. Peerybingle may leave it on record to the end of time that she couldn't say which of them began it; but I say the kettle did. I ought to know, I hope? The kettle began it, full five minutes by the little wax-faced Dutch clock in the corner, before the cricket uttered a chirp.

As if the clock hadn't finished striking, and the convulsive little haymaker at the top of it, jerking away right and left with a scythe in front of a Moorish palace, hadn't mowed down half an acre of imaginary grass before the cricket joined in at all!

Why, I am not naturally positive. Every one knows that. I wouldn't set my own opinion against the opinion of Mrs. Peerybingle, unless I were quite sure, on any account whatever. Nothing should induce me. But this is a question of fact. And the fact is, that the kettle began it, at least five minutes before the cricket gave any sign of being in existence. Contradict me, and I'll say ten.

Let me narrate exactly how it happened. I should have proceeded to do so, in my very first word, but for this plain consideration—if I am to tell a story I must begin at the beginning; and how is it possible to begin at the beginning, without beginning at the kettle?

It appeared as if there were a sort of match, or trial of skill, you must understand, between the kettle and the cricket. And this is what led to it, and how it came about.

Mrs. Peerybingle, going out into the raw twilight, and clicking over the wet stones in a pair of pattens that worked innumerable rough impressions of the first pro-

position in Euclid all about the yard—Mrs. Peerybingle filled the kettle at the water-but. Presently returning, less the pattens (and a good deal less, for they were tall and Mrs. Peerybingle was but short), she set the kettle on the fire. In doing which she lost her temper, or mislaid it for an instant; for the water being uncomfortably cold, and in that sloppy, slushy, sticky sort of state wherein it seems to penetrate through every kind of substance, patten rings included, had laid hold of Mrs. Peerybingle's toes, and even splashed her legs. And when we rather plume ourselves (with reason too) upon our legs, and keep ourselves particularly neat in point of stockings, we find this, for the moment, hard to bear.

Besides, the kettle was aggravating and obstinate. It wouldn't allow itself to be adjusted on the top bar; it wouldn't hear of accommodating itself kindly to the knobs of coal; it would lean forward with a drunken air, and dribble, a very idiot of a kettle, on the hearth. It was quarrelsome, and hissed and spluttered morosely at the fire. To sum up all, the lid, resisting Mrs. Peerybingle's fingers, first of all turned topsy-turvy, and then, with an ingenious pertinacity deserving of a better cause, dived sideways in—down to the very bottom of the kettle. And the hull of the *Royal George* has never made half the monstrous resistance to coming out of the water, which the lid of that kettle employed against Mrs. Peerybingle, before she got it up again.

It looked sullen and pig-headed enough, even then; carrying its handle with an air of defiance, and cooking its spout pertly and mockingly at Mrs. Peerybingle, as if it said, "I won't boil. Nothing shall induce me!"

But Mrs. Peerybingle, with restored good-humour, dusted her chubby

little hands against each other, and sat down before the kettle, laughing. Meantime, the jolly blaze uprose and fell, flashing and gleaming on the little haymaker at the top of the Dutch clock, until one might have thought he stood still before the Moorish palace, and nothing was in motion but the flame.

He was on the move, however; and had his spasms, two to the second, all right and regular. But his sufferings when the clock was going to strike were frightful to behold; and when a cuckoo looked out of a trap-door in the palace, and gave out six times, it shook him, each time, like a spectral voice—or like a something waxy, plucking at his legs.

It was not until a violent commotion and a whirring noise among the weights and ropes below him had quite subsided, that this terrified haymaker became himself again. Nor was he startled without reason; for these rattling, bony skeletons of clocks are very disconcerting in their operation, and I wonder very much how any set of men, but most of all how Dutchmen, can have had a liking to invent them. For there is a popular belief that Dutchmen love broad cases and much clothing for their own lower selves; and they might know better than to leave their clocks so very lank and unprotected, surely.

Now it was, you observe, that the kettle began to spend the evening. Now it was, that the kettle, growing mellow and musical, began to have irrepressible gurglings in its throat, and to indulge in short vocal snorts, which it checked in the bud, as if it hadn't quite made up its mind yet, to be good company. Now it was, that after two or three such vain attempts to stifle its convivial sentiments, it threw off all moroseness, all reserve, and burst into a stream of song so cosy and hilarious, as

never maddened nightingale yet formed the least idea of.

So plain, too! Bless you, you might have understood it like a book—better than some books you and I could name, perhaps. With its warm breath gushing forth in a light cloud which merrily and gracefully ascended a few feet, then hung about the chimney-corner as its own domestic heaven, it trolled its song with that strong energy of cheerfulness, that its iron body hummed and stirred upon the fire; and the lid itself, the recently rebellious lid—such is the influence of a bright example—performed a sort of jig, and clattered like a deaf and dumb cymbal that had never known the use of its twin brother.

That this song of the kettle's was a song of invitation and welcome to somebody out of doors—to some body at that moment coming on, towards the snug and small home and the crisp fire—there is no doubt whatever. Mrs. Peerybingle knew it, perfectly, as she sat musing before the hearth. It's a dark night, sang the kettle, and the rotten leaves are lying by the way; and, above, all is mist and darkness, and, below, all is mire and clay; and there's only one relief in all the sad and murky air; and I don't know that it is one, for it's nothing but a glare of deep and angry crimson, where the sun and wind together set a brand upon the clouds for being guilty of such weather; and the widest open country is a long dull streak of black; and there's hear-frost on the finger-post, and thaw upon the track; and the ice it is water, and the water isn't free; and you couldn't say that anything is what it ought to be; but he's coming, coming, coming!

And here, if you like, the cricket did chime in, with a chirp, chirp, chirp, of such magnitude, by way of chorus; with a voice so astoundingly disproportionate to its size (size you couldn't see it!), that if it had then and there burst itself like an overcharged gun, if it had fallen a victim on the spot, and chirruped its little body into fifty pieces, it would have seemed a natural and inevitable consequence, for which it had expressly laboured.

The kettle had had the last of its solo performance. It persevered with undiminished ardour; but the cricket took first fiddle and kept it. Good Heavens, how it chirped! Its shrill, sharp, piercing voice resounded through the house, and seemed to twinkle in the outer darkness like a star. There was an indescribable little thrill and tremble in it, at its loudest, which suggested its being carried off its legs, made to leap again, by its own intense enthusiasm.

Yet they whet very well together, the cricket and the kettle. The burden of the song was still the same; and louder, louder, louder still, they sang it in their emulation.

The fair little listener—for fair she was, and young; through something of what is called the dumpling shape, but I don't myself object to that—lighted a candle, glanced at the haymaker on the top of the clock, who was getting in a pretty average crop of minutes; and looked out of the window, where she saw nothing, owing to the darkness, but her own face imaged in the glass. And my opinion is (and so would yours have been), that she might have looked a long way, and seen nothing half so agreeable. When she came back, and sat down in her former seat, the cricket, and the kettle were still keeping it up, with a perfect fury of competition. The kettle's weak side clearly being, that he didn't know when he was beat.

There was all the excitement of a race about it. Chirp, chirp, chirp! Cricket a mile ahead. Hum, hum, hum—! Kettle making play in the distance, like a great top. Chirp, chirp, chirp! Cricket round the corner. Hum, hum, hum—! Kettle sticking to him in his own way; no idea of giving in. Chirp, chirp, chirp! Cricket fresher than ever. Hum, hum, hum—! Kettle slow and steady. Chirp, chirp, chirp! Cricket going in to finish him. Hum, hum, hum—! Kettle not to be finished. Until at last, they got so jumbled together, in the hurry-scurry, heater-skelter, of the match, that whether the kettle chirped and the cricket hummed, or the cricket chirped and the kettle hummed, or they both chirped and both hummed, it would have taken a clearer head than yours or mine to have decided with anything like certainty. But of this, there is no doubt; that the kettle and the cricket, at one and the same moment, and by some power of amalgamation best known to themselves, sent, each, his friendly song of comfort streaming into a ray of the candle that shone out through the window, and along way down the lane. And this light, bursting on a certain person who, on the instant, approached towards it through the gloom, expressed the whole thing to him, literally in a twinkling, and cried, "Welcome home, home, old fellow! Welcome home, my boy!"

This end attained, the kettle, being dead beat, boiled over, and was taken off the fire. Mrs. Peerybingle then went running to the door, where, with the wheels of a cart, the tramp of a horse, the voice of a man, the tearing in and out of an excited dog, and the surprising and mysterious appearance of a baby, there was soon the very what's-his-name to pay.

Where the baby came from, or how Mrs. Peerybingle got hold of it in that flash of time, I don't know. But a live baby there was, in Mrs. Peerybingle's arms; and a pretty tolerable amount of pride she seemed to have in it, when she was drawn gently to the fire, by a sturdy figure of a man, much taller and much older than herself, who had to stoop a long way down to kiss her. But she was worth the trouble. Six foot six, with the humpago, might have done it.

"Oh, goodness, John!" said Mrs. P. "What a state you're in with the weather!"

He was something the worse for it, undoubtedly. The thick mist hung in clots upon his eyelashes like candied thaw; and, between the fog and fire together, there were rainbows in his very whiskers.

"Why, you see, Dot," John made answer slowly, as he unrolled a shawl from about his throat, and warmed his hands; "it ain't exactly summer weather. So no wonder."

"I wish you wouldn't call me Dot, John. I don't like it," said Mrs. Peerybingle, pointing in a way that clearly showed she *did* like it very much.

"Why, what else are you?" returned John, looking down upon her with a smile, and giving her waist as tight a squeeze as his huge hand and arm could give. "A dot and"—here he glanced at the baby—"a dot and carry—I won't say it, for fear I should spoil it; but I was very near a joke. I don't know as ever I was nearer."

He was often near to something or other very clever, by his own account, this John so heavy, but so light of spirit; so rough upon the surface, but so gentle at the core; so dull without, so quick within; so stolid, but so good! O Mother Nature, give thy children the true poetry of heart that hid itself in this poor carrier's breast—he was but a carrier by the way—and we can bear to have them talking prose, and leading lives of prose; and bear to bless thee for their company!

It was pleasant to see Dot, with her little figure and her baby in her arms—a very doll of a baby—glancing with a coquettish thoughtfulness at the fire, and inclining her delicate little head just enough on one side to let it rest in an odd, half-natural, half-affecting, wholly nestling and agreeable manner, on the great rugged figure of the carrier. It was pleasant to see him, with his tender awkwardness, endeavouring to adapt his rude support to her slight need, and make his burly middle-age a leaning-staff not inappropriate to her blooming youth. It was pleasant to observe how Tilly Slowboy, waiting in the background for the baby, took

special cognisance (though in her earliest teens) of this grouping; and stood with her mouth and eyes wide open, and her head thrust forward, taking it in as if it were air. Nor was it less agreeable to observe how John the carrier, reference being made by Dot to the aforesaid baby, checked his hand when on the point of touching the infant, as if he thought he might crack it; and bending down, surveyed it from a safe distance, with a kind of puzzled pride, such as an amiable mastiff might be supposed to show if he found himself, one day, the father of a young c-nary.

"Ain't he beautiful, John? Don't he look precious in his sleep?"

"Very precious," said John. "Very much." He generally is asleep, ain't he?"

"Lor, John! Go d gracious, no!"

"Oh," said John, pondering. "I thought his eyes was generally shut. Hello!"

"Goodness, John, how you startle one!"

"It ain't right for him to turn 'em up in that way!" said the astonished carrier, "is it? See how he's winking with both of 'em at once! and to look at his mouth! Why, he's gasping like a gold and silver."

"You don't deserve to be a father, you don't," said Dot, with all the dignity of an experienced matron. "But how should you know what little complaints children are troubled with, John! You wouldn't so much as know their names, you stupid fellow!" And when she had turned the baby over on her left arm, and had slapped its back as a restorative, she pinched her husband's ear, laughing.

"No," said John, pulling off his outer coat. "It's very true, Dot. I don't know much about it. I only know that I've been fighting pretty stiffly with the wind to-night. It's been blowing north-east, straight into the cart, the whole way home."

"Poor old man, so it has!" cried Mrs. Peerybingle, instantly becoming very active. "Here! Take the precious darling, Tilly, while I make myself of some use. Bless it, I could smother it with kissing it, I could! Hie then, good dog! Hie, Boxer, boy! Only let me make the tea first, John! and then I'll help you with the parcels, like a busy bee. 'How doth the little'—and all the rest of it, you know, John. Did you ever learn 'how doth the little' when you went to school, John?"

"Not to quite know it," John returned. "I was very near it once. But I should only have spoiled it, I dare say."

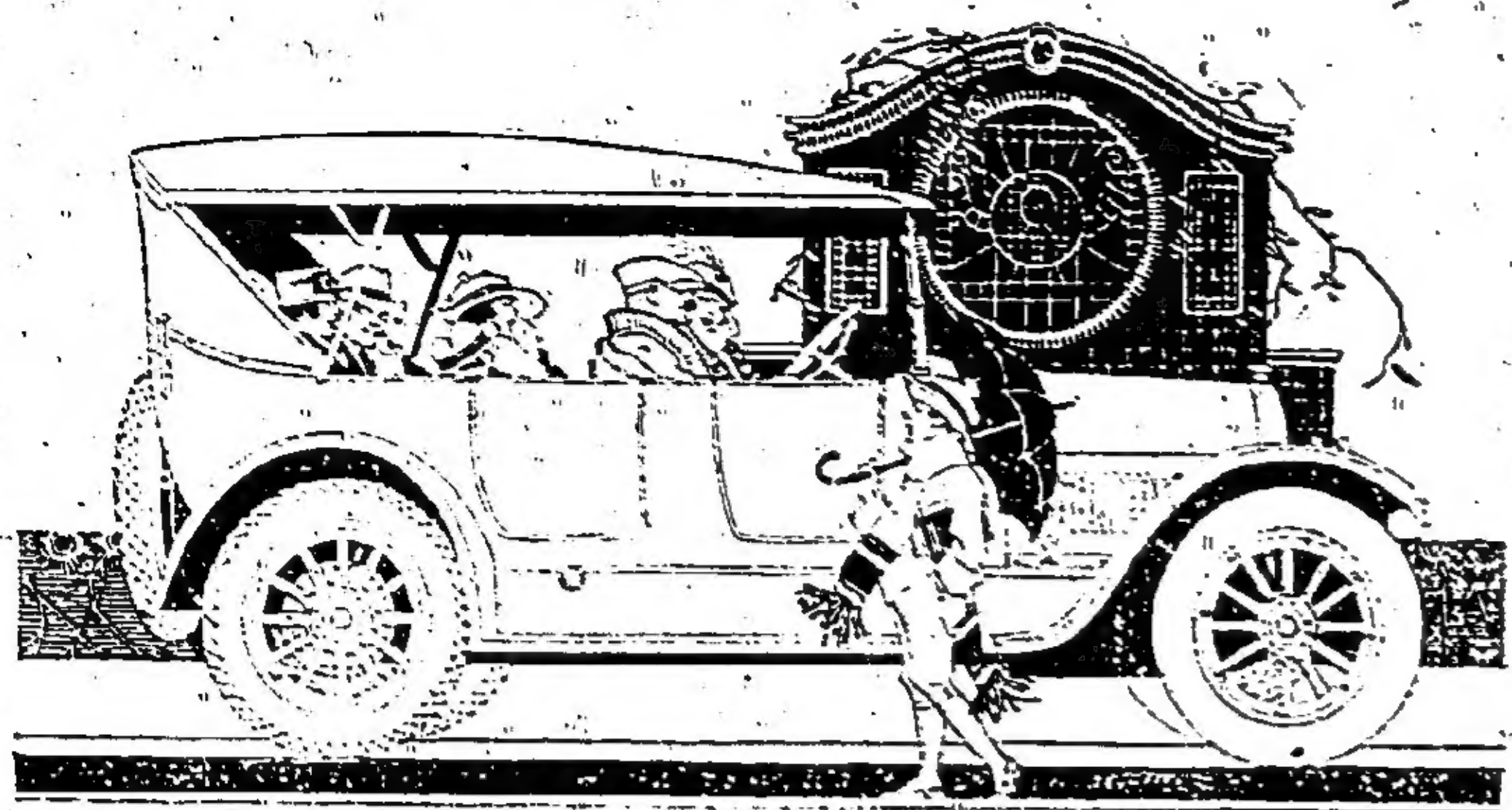
"Ha, ha," laughed Dot. She had the bluest little laugh you ever heard. "What a dear old darling of a duncer you are, John, to be sure!"

(Continued on Page 3)

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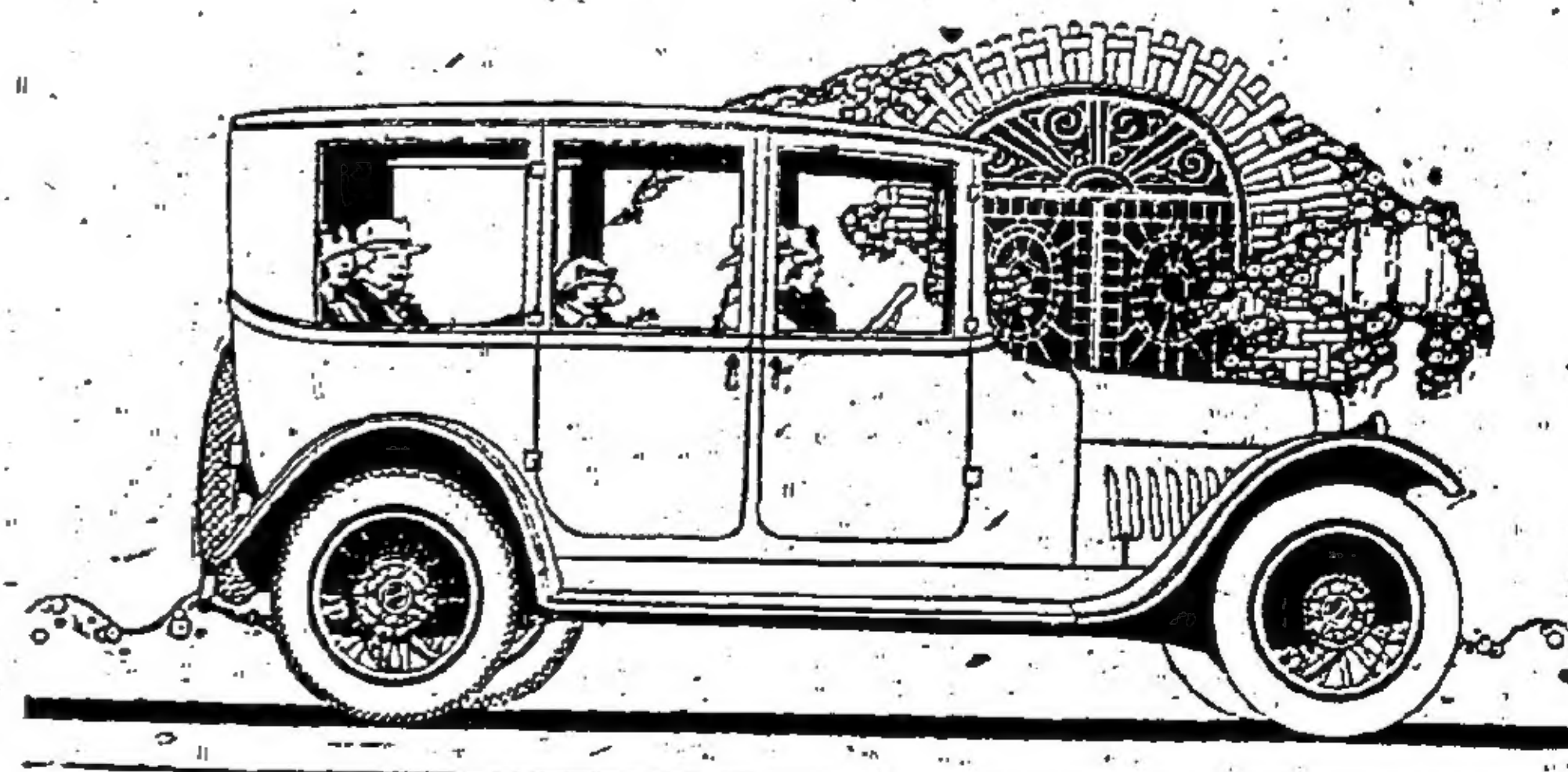
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"THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH."

(Continued from Page 7.)

Not at all disputing this position, John went out to see that the boy with the lantern, which had been dancing to and fro before the door and window, like a will-o'-the-wisp, took due care of the horse; who was faster than you would quite believe. If I gave you his measure, and so old that his birthday was lost in the mists of antiquity. Boyer, feeling that his attentions were due to the family in general, and must be impartially distributed, dashed in and out with bewildering inconstancy; now, describing a circle of short puffs round the horse, where, he was being rubbed down at the stable door; now feigning to make savage rushes at his mistress, and facetiously bringing himself to a sudden stop; now, eliciting a shriek from Tilly Slowboy, in the low running-chair near the fire, by the unexpected application of his moist nose to her countenance; now, exhibiting an obnoxious interest in the baby; now, going round and round upon the hearth, and lying down as if he had established himself for the night; now, perching up again, and picking that portion of a bag-end of a tail of his own into the weather, as if he had just remembered an appointment, and was off, at a round trot, to keep it.

"There! There's the tea-pot, ready on the hob!" said Dot, as briskly busy as a child at play at keeping house. "And there's the cold knuckle of ham; and there's the butter; and there's the crusty loaf and all!" Here's a clothes-basket for the small parcels. John, if you've got any there—where are you, John?—Don't let the dear child fall under the grate, Tilly, whatever you do!

It may be noted of Miss Slowboy, in spite of her rejecting the caution with some vivacity, that she had a rare and surprising talent of getting this busy into difficulties; and had several times imperilled its short life, in quiet way peculiarly her own. She was of a spare and straight shape, the young lady, inasmuch that her garments appeared to be in constant danger of sliding off those sharp pegs, her shoulders, on which they were loosely hung. Her costume was remarkable for the partial development, or all possible occasions, of some flannel vestment of a singular structure; also for affording glimpses, in the region of the back, of a corset, or pair of stays in colour a dead green. Being always in a state of gaping admiration at everything, and absorbed, besides, in the perpetual contemplation of her mistress's per-

lections and the baby's, Miss Slowboy, in her little errors of judgment, may be said to have done equal honour to her head and to her heart; and though these did less honour to the baby's head, which they were the occasional means of bringing into contact with deal doors, dressers, stair-rails, bedposts, and other foreign substances, still they were the honest results of Tilly Slowboy's constant astonishment at finding herself so kindly treated, and installed in such a comfortable home. For the maternal and paternal Slowboys were alike unknown to fame, and Tilly had been bred by public charity, a foundling; which word, though only differing from fondling by one vowel's length, is very different in meaning, and expresses quite another thing.

To have seen little Mrs. Peerybingle come back with her husband, rugging at the clothes-basket, and making the most strenuous exertions to do nothing at all (for he carried it), would have amused you almost as much as it amused him. It may have entertained the cricket too, for anything I know; but certainly, it now began to chirp again vehemently.

"Heyday!" said John, in his slow way. "It's merrier than ever, tonight, I think."

"And it's sure to bring us good fortune, John! It always has gone so. To have a cricket on the hearth is the luckiest thing in all the world!"

John looked at her as if he had very nearly got the thought into his head, that she was his cricket in chief, and he quite agreed with her. But it was probably one of his narrow escapes, for he said nothing.

The first time I heard its cheerful little note, John, was on that night when you brought me home—when you brought me to my new home here; its little mistress, John?"

Oh, yes, John remembered. It should think so!

"Its chirp was such a welcome to me! It seemed so full of promise and encouragement. It seemed to say, you would be kind and gentle with me, and would not expect (I had a fear of that, John, then) to find an old head on the shoulders of your foolish little wife."

John thoughtfully patted one of the shoulders, and then the head, as though he would have said, No, no, he had had no such expectation; he had been quite content to take them as they were. And really he had reason. They were very comely.

"It spoke the truth, John, when it seemed to say so; for you have ever been, I am sure, the best, the most considerate, the most affectionate of husbands to me. This has been a

happy home, John; and I love the cricket for its sake!"

"Why, so do I, then," said the carrier. "So do I, Dot."

"I love it for the many times I have heard it, and the many thoughts its harmless music has given me. Sometimes, in the twilight, when I have felt a little solitary and down-hearted, John—before baby was here, to keep me company and make the house gay—when I have thought how lonely you would be if I should die; how lonely I should be, if I could know that you had lost me, dear; its chirp, chirp upon the hearth, has seemed to tell me of another little voice, so sweet, so very dear to me, before whose coming sound my trouble vanished like a dream. And when I used to fear—I did fear once, John; I was very young, you know—that our marriage might prove to be an ill-assorted marriage, I being such a child, and you more like my guardian than my husband; and that you might not, however hard you tried, be able to learn to love me as you hoped and prayed you might; its chirp, chirp, chirp, has cheered me up again, and filled me with new trust and confidence. I was thinking of these things to-night, dear, when I sat expecting you; and I love the cricket for its sake!"

Behind the cart, just now, and though "And so do I," repeated John.

"But Dot? I hope and pray that I might learn to love you! How you talk! I had learned that, long before I brought you here, to be the cricket's little mistress, Dot?"

She laid her hand, an instance, on his arm, and looked up at him with an agonized face, as if she would have told him something. Next moment, she was down upon her knees before the basket, speaking in a springy voice, and busy with the parcels.

"There are not many of them to-night, John, but I saw some goods they give more trouble, perhaps, still they pay as well; so we have no reason to grumble, have we? Besides, you have been delivering, I dare say, as you came along?"

"Oh, yes," John said. "A good many."

"Why, what's this round box? Heart alive, John, it's a wedding-cake!"

"Leave a woman alone to find out that," said John admiringly. "Now a man would never have thought of it! Whereas, it's my belief that if you was to pack a wedding-cake up in a tea-chest, or a turn-up bedstead, or a pickled-salmon keg, or any unlikely thing, a woman would be sure to find it out directly. Yes; I called for it at the pastry-cook's."

"And it weighs I don't know what—whole hundred-weights!" cried

Dot, making a great demonstration of trying to lift it. "Whose is it, John? Where is it going?"

"Read the writing on the other side," said John.

"Why, John? My goodness, John!"

"Ah! who'd have thought it?" John returned.

"You never mean to say," pursued Dot, sitting on the floor and shaking her head at him, "that it's Gruff and Tackleton the toymaker?"

John nodded.

Mrs. Peerybingle nodded also, fifty times at least. Not in assent—in dumb and pitying amazement; screwing up her lips, the while, with all their little force (they were never made for screwing up; I am clear of that), and looking the good carrier through and through, in her abstraction.

Miss Slowboy, in the meantime, who had a mechanical power of reproducing scraps of current conversation for the delectation of the baby, with all the sense struck out of them, and all the nouns changed into the plural number, inquired aloud of that young creature, was it Gruff and Tackleton the toymakers then, and would it call at pastry-cooks for wedding-cakes, and did its mothers know the boxes when its fathers brought them home; and so on.

"And that is really to come about!" said Dot. "Why, she and I were girls at school together, John."

He might have been thinking of her, or nearly thinking of her, perhaps, as she was in that same school-time. She looked upon her with a thoughtful pleasure, but he made no answer.

"And he's as old! As unlike her!—Why, how many years older than you is Gruff and Tackleton, John?"

"How many more cups of tea shall I drink to-night at one sitting, than Gruff and Tackleton ever took in four, I wonder!" replied John good-humouredly, as he drew a chair to the round table, and began at the cold ham. "As to eating, I eat but little, but, that little I enjoy, Dot."

Even this, his usual sentiment at meal times, one of his innocent delusions (for his appetite was always obstinate, and flatly contradicted him), awoke no smile in the face of his little wife, who stood among the parcels, pushing the cake-box slowly from her with her foot; and never once looked, though her eyes were cast down too, upon the dainty shoe she generally was so mindful of. Absorbed in thought, she stood there, heedless alike of the tea and John (although he called to her, and rapped the table with his knife to startle her), until he rose and touched her on the arm; when she looked at him for a moment,

and hurried to her place behind the tea-board, laughing at her negligence. But not as she had laughed before. The manner and the music were quite changed.

The cricket, too, had stopped. Somehow the room was not so cheerful as it had been. Nothing like it.

"So these are all the parcels, are they, John?" she said, breaking a long silence, which the honest carrier had devoted to the practical illustration of one part of his favourite sentiment—certainly enjoying what he ate, if it could not be admitted that he ate but little. "So these are all the parcels, are they, John?"

"Rat's all," said John. "Why—no—I—laying down knife and fork, and taking a long breath—I declare—I've clean forgotten the old gentleman!"

"The old gentleman?"

"In the cart," said John. "He was asleep, among the straw, the last time I saw him. I've very nearly remembered him twice, since I came in; but he went out of my head again. Hello! Yabip there! Rouse up! That's my hearty!"

John said these latter words outside the door, whether he had hurried with the candle in his hand.

Miss Slowboy, conscious of some mysterious reference to the old gentleman, and connecting in her mystified imagination certain associations of a religious nature with the phrase, was so disturbed, that hastily rising from the low chair by the fire to seek protection near the skirts of her mistress, and coming into contact as she crossed the doorway with an ancient stranger, she instinctively made a charge or butt at him with the only offensive instrument within her reach.

This instrument happening to be the baby, great commotion and alarm ensued, which the sagacity of Boxer rather tended to increase; for that good dog, more thoughtful than his master, had, it seemed, been watching the old gentleman in his sleep, lest he should walk off with a few young poplar trees that were tied up behind the cart; and he still attended on him very closely, worrying his gaiters in fact, and making dead sets at the buttons.

"You're such an undeniable good sleeper, sir," said John, when tranquillity was restored—in the meantime the old gentleman had time to stoo, bareheaded and motionless, in the centre of the room—"that I have half a mind to ask you where the other six are—only that would be a joke, and I know I should spoil it. Very near though," murmured the carrier, with a chuckle, "near near!"

The stranger, who had long, white hair, good features, singularly bold and well defined for an old man, and dark, bright, penetrating eyes, looked

round with a smile, and saluted the carrier's wife by gravely inclining his head.

His garb was very quaint and odd—a long, long way behind the time. Its hue was brown, all over. In his hand he held a great brown club or walking-stick; and striking this upon the floor, it fell asunder, and became a chair. On which he sat down, quite composedly.

"There!" said the carrier, turning to his wife. "That's the way I found him, sitting by the roadside! Upright as a milestone. And almost as deaf."

"Sitting in the open air, John?"

"In the open air," replied the carrier, "just at dusk. Carriage paid," he said; and gave me eighteenpence. Then he got in. And here he is."

"He's going, John, I think?"

Not at all. He was only going to speak.

"If you please, I was to be left till called for," said the stranger mildly. "Don't mind me."

With that, he took a pair of spectacles from one of his large pockets, and a book from another, and leisurely began to read, making no more of Boxer than if he had been a house-lamb.

The carrier and his wife exchanged a look of perplexity. The stranger raised his head, and glancing from the latter to the former, said—

"Your daughter, my good friend?"

"Wife," returned John.

"Niece?" said the stranger.

"Wife," roared John.

"Indeed?" observed the stranger.

"Surely! Very young!"

He quietly turned over, and resumed his reading. But, before he could have read two lines, he again interrupted himself, to say—

"Baby, yours."

John gave him a gigantic nod, equivalent to an answer in the affirmative, delivered through a speaking-trumpet.

"Girl?"

"Bo-o-oy!" roared John.

"Also, very young, eh?"

Mrs. Peerybingle instantly struck in. "Two months and three days—Vaccinated just six weeks ago—Took very fine-ly! Considered, by the doctor, a remarkably beautiful child! Equal to the general run of children at five months' old!"

Takes notice, in a way quite wonderful! May seem impossible to you, but feels his legs all-ready!"

Here, the breathless little mother, who had been shrieking these short sentences into the old man's ear, until her pretty face was crimsoned, held up the baby before him as a stubborn and triumphant fact; while Tilly Slowboy, with a melodious cry of "ketcher, ketcher"—which sounded like some

unknown words, adapted to a popular sneeze—performed some cawking gambols round that all unconscious innocent.

"Hark! He's called for, sure enough," said John. "There's somebody at the door. Open it, Tilly."

Before she could reach it, however, it was opened from without; being a primitive sort of door, with a latch, that any one could lift if he chose—and a good many people did choose, for all kinds of neighbours liked to have a cheerful word or two with the carrier, though he was no great talker himself. Being opened, it gave admission to a little, meagre, thoughtful dingy-faced man, who seemed to have made himself a greatcoat from the sackcloth covering of some old box; for, when he turned to shut the door, and keep the weather out, he disclosed upon the back of that garment, the inscription G and T in large black capitals. Also the Glass in-bold characters.

"Good-evening, John!" said the little man. "Good-evening, mum. Good-evening, Tilly. Good-evening, Unbeknown! How's baby, mum? Boxer's pretty well, I hope?"

"All thriving, Caleb," replied Dot. "I am sure you need only look at the dear child, for one, to know that."

"And I'm sure I need only look at you for another," said Caleb.

He didn't look at her though; he had a wandering and thoughtful eye which seemed to be always projecting itself into some other time and place, no matter what he said; a description which will equally apply to his voice.

"Or at Tilly for another," said Caleb. "Or at John, as far as that goes. Or certainly at Boxer."

"Busy just now, Caleb?" asked the carrier.

"Why, pretty well, John," he returned, with the distraught air of a man who was casting about for the philosopher's stone, at least. "Pretty much so. There's rather a run on Noah's ark at present. I could have wished to improve upon the family, but I don't see how it's to be done at the price. It would be a satisfaction to one's mind, to make it clearer which was Shems and Hams, and which was wives. Flies ain't on that scale neither, as compared with elephants, you know? Ah, well! Have you got anything in the parcel line for me, John?"

The carrier put his hand into a pocket of the coat he had taken off, and brought out, carefully preserved in moss and paper, and tiny flower-pot.

"There it is!" he said, adjusting it with great care. "Not so much as a leaf damaged. Full of buds!"

Caleb's dull eye brightened as he took it and thanked him.

(Continued on Page 11.)

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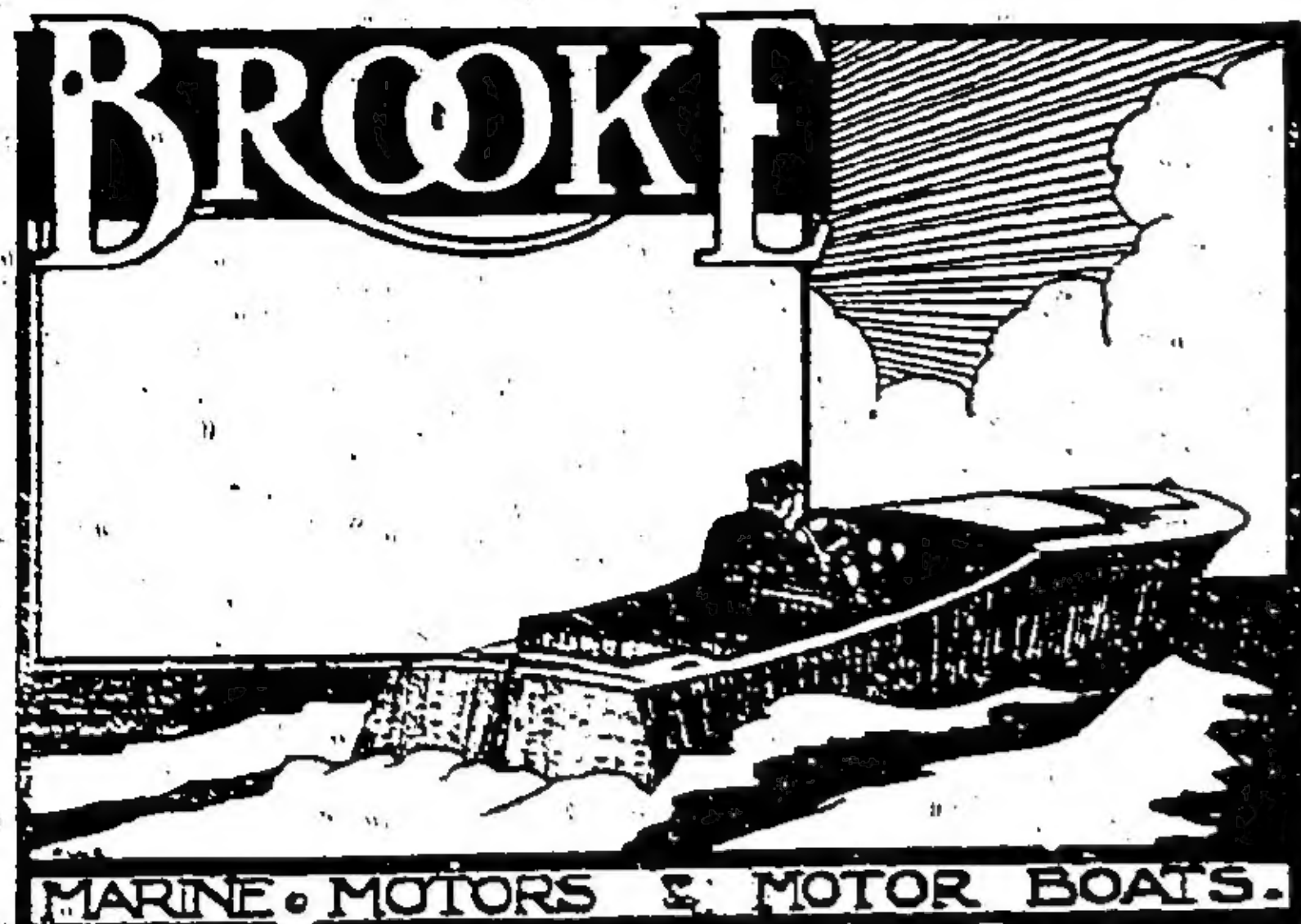
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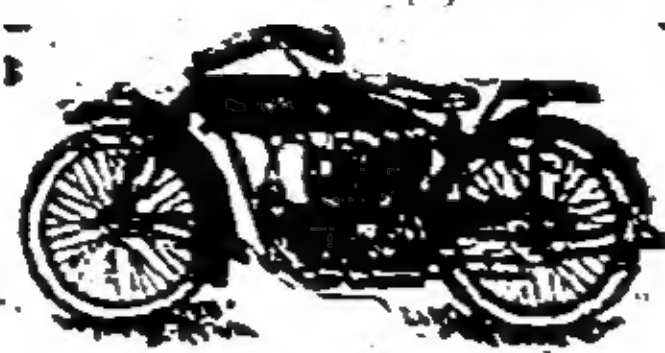
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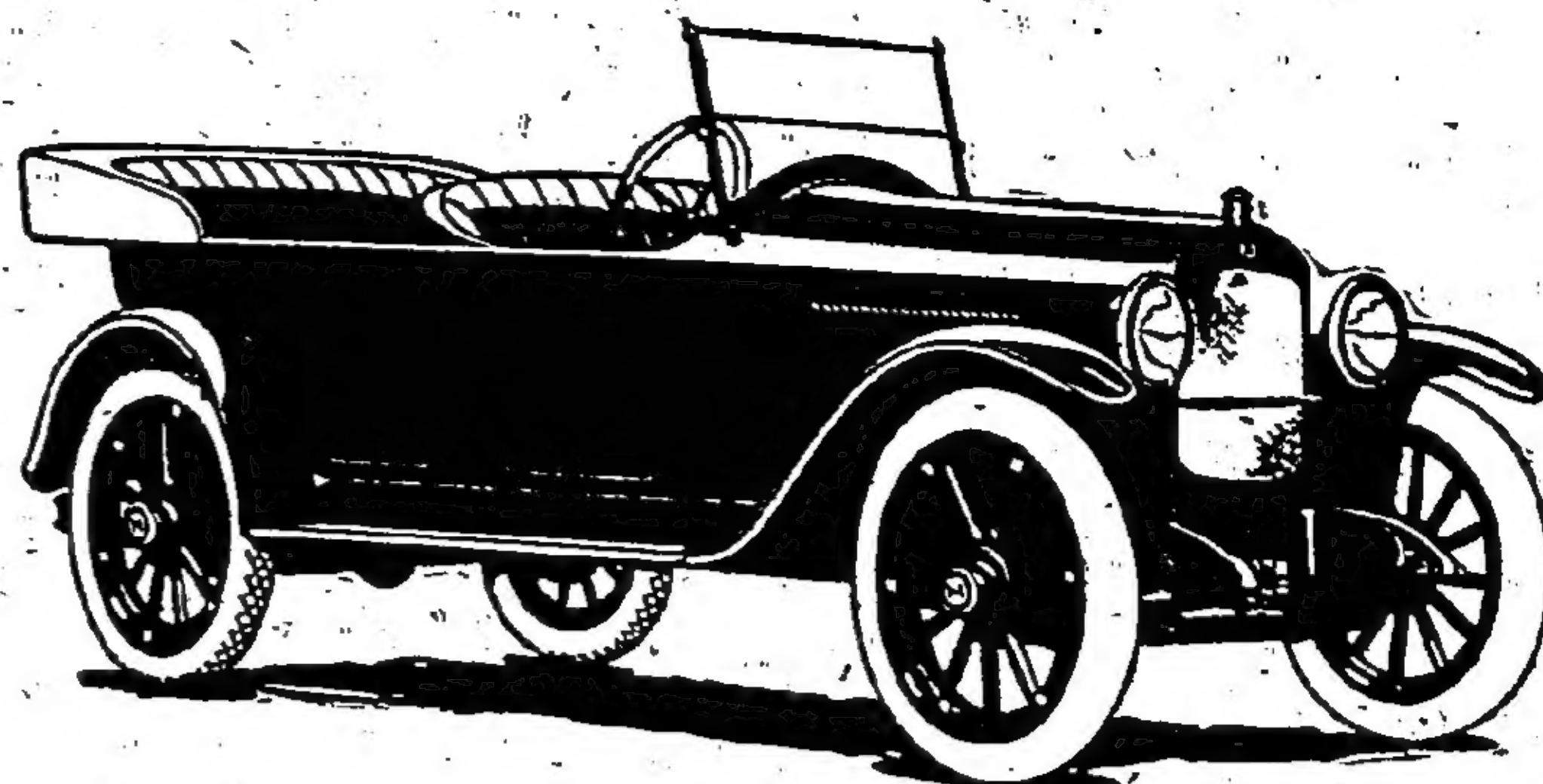
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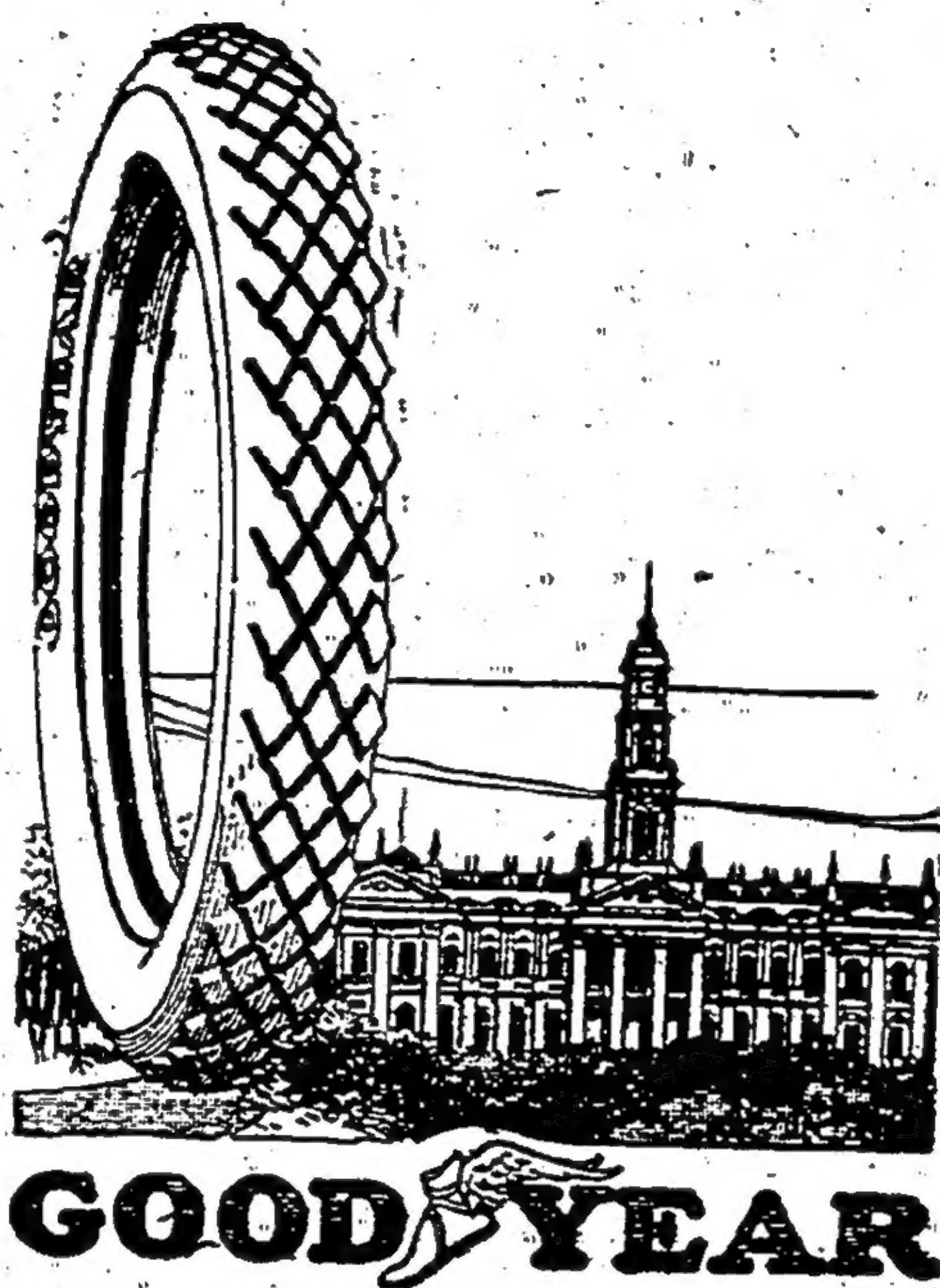
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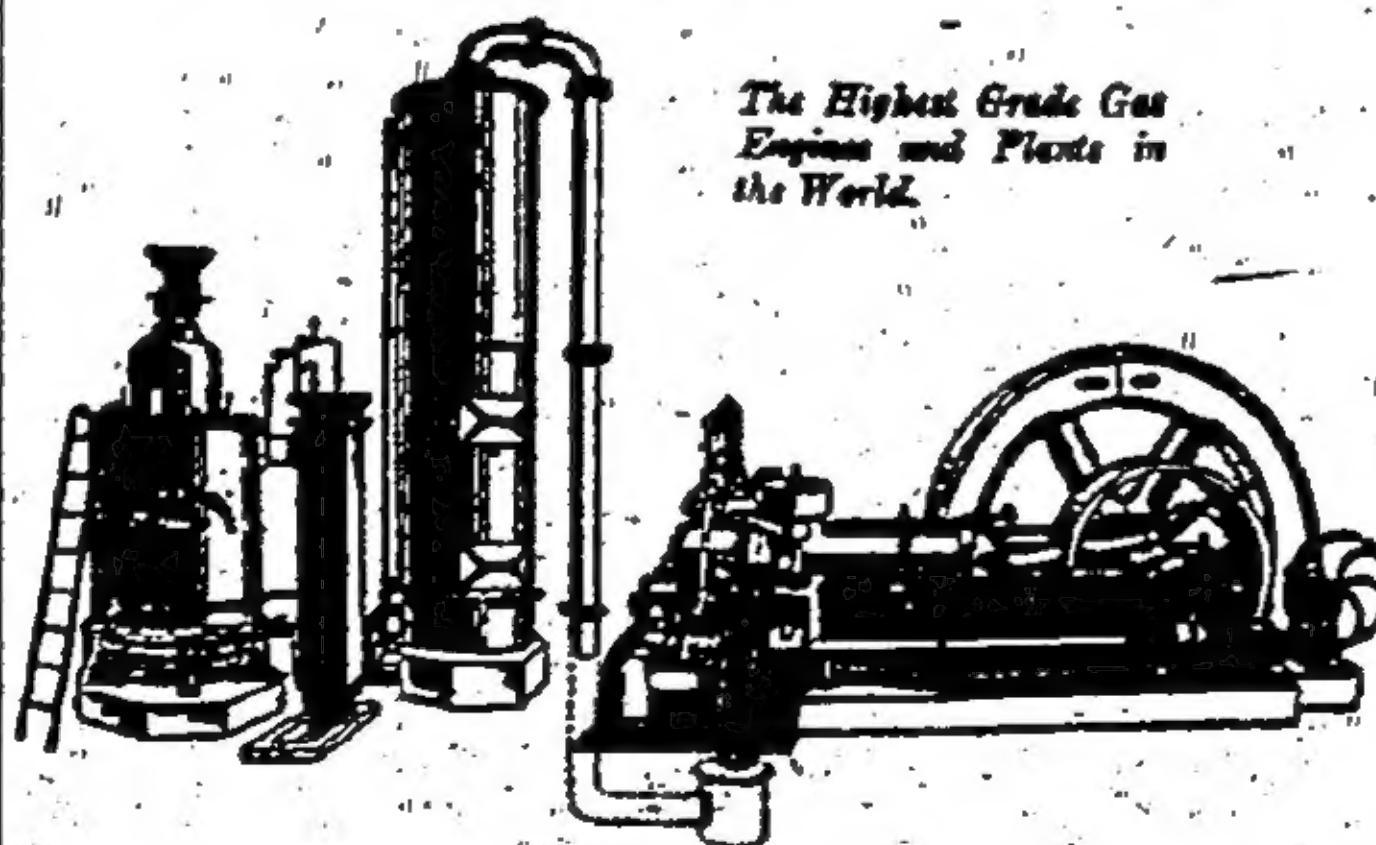
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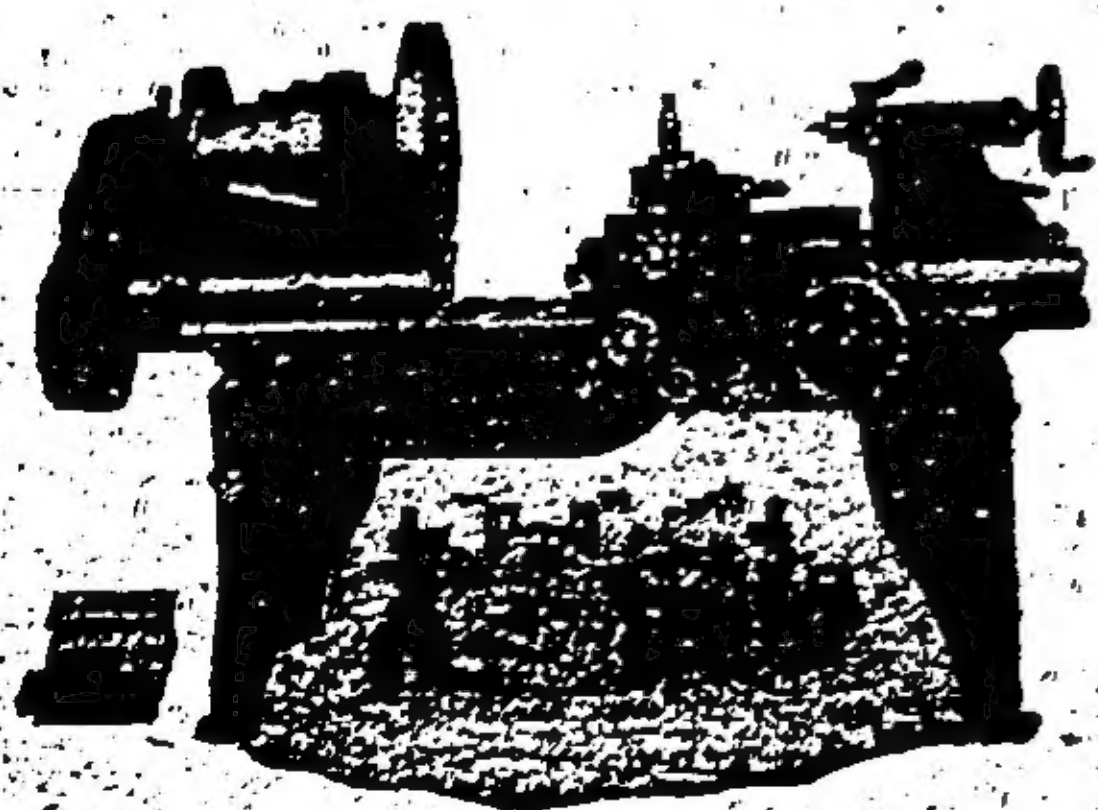
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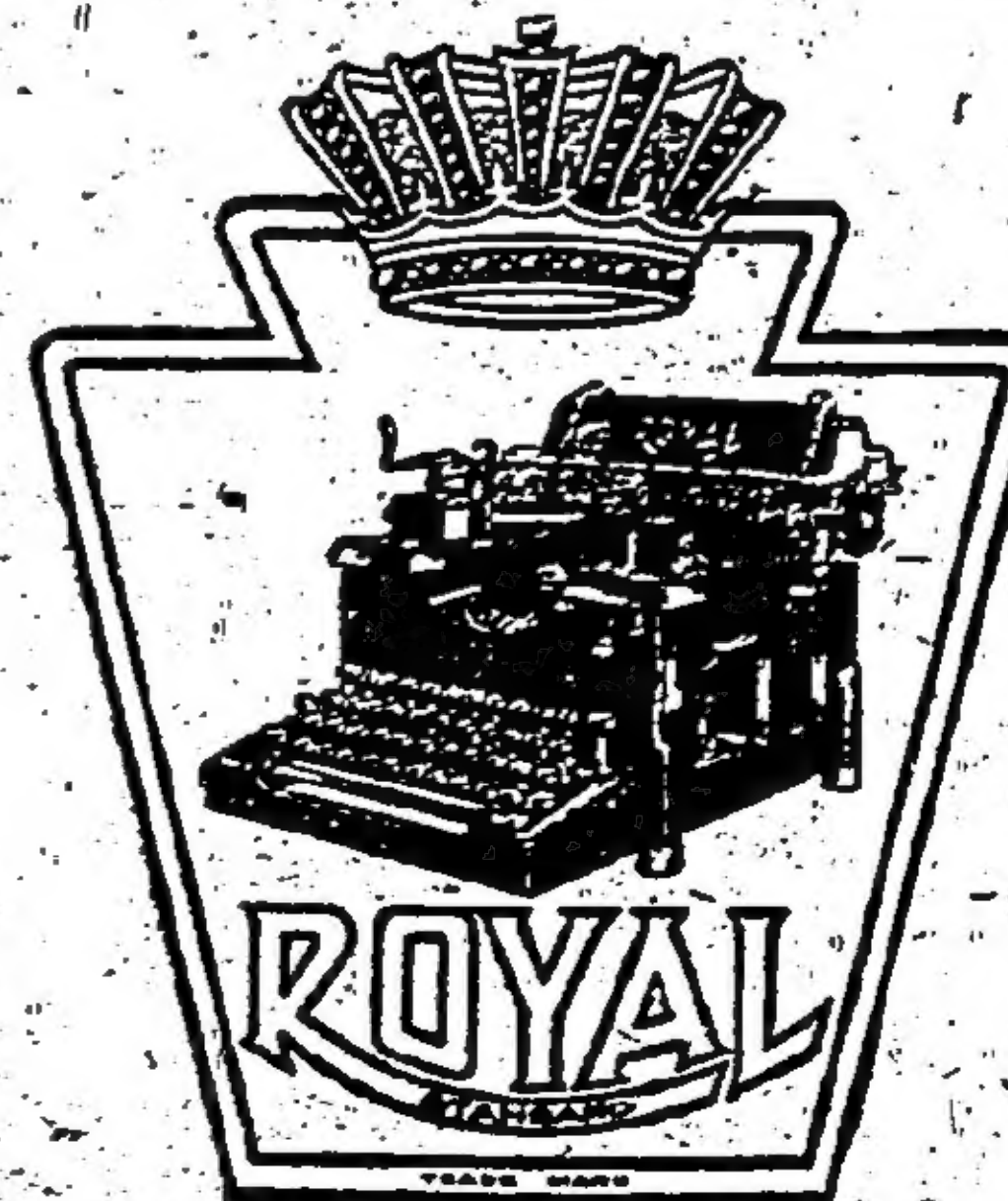
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"THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH."

(Continued from Page 9.)

"Dear, Caleb," said the carrier. "Very dear at this season." "Never mind that. It would be cheap to me, whatever it cost," returned the little man. "Anything else, John?" "A small box," replied the carrier. "Here you are!" "For Caleb Plummer," said the little man, spelling out the direction. "With cash." "With cash, John? I don't think it's for me." "With care," returned the carrier, looking over his shoulder. "Where do you make out cash?" "Oh! To be sure!" said Caleb. "It's all right. With care? Yes, that's mine. It might have been with cash, indeed, if my dear boy in the golden South Americas had lived, John. You loved him like a son, didn't you? You needn't say you did. I know, of course," Caleb Plummer. With care. Yes, yes, it's all right. It's a box of dolls' eyes, for my daughter's work. I wish it was her own sight in a box, John."

"I wish it, or could be," cried the carrier. "Thank you," said the little man. "You speak very heavily. To think that he should never see the dolls— all day long! That's where it comes. What's the damage, John?" "I'll damage you," said John. "I'll damage you, Dot? Very near." "Well! It's like you to say so," observed the little man. "It's your kind way. Let me see. I think that's all."

"I think now," said the carrier. "Try again." "Something for our governor, eh?" said Caleb, after pondering a little while. "To be sure. That's what I came for; but my head's so running over them and they're so heavy, he hasn't been here, has he?"

"Not he," returned the carrier. "He's too busy counting." "He's coming round though," said Caleb. "For he told me to keep on the near-side of the road going home, and it was ten to one he'd take up. I had better go by the bye. You couldn't have the goodness to let me pinch Boxer's tail, mum, for half a moment, could you?"

"Why? Caleb, what a question?" "Oh, never mind, mum," said the little man. "He mightn't like it, perhaps. There's a small order just come in, for barking dogs, and I should wish to go as close to matter as I could. No suspense. That's all. Never mind, mum."

It happened opportunely, that Boxer, without receiving the proposed stimulus, began to bark with great zeal. But as this implied the approach of some new visitor, Caleb, postponing his study from the life to a more convenient season, shouldered the round box, and took a hurried leave. He might have spared himself the trouble, for he met the visitor upon the threshold.

"Oh! You are here, are you? Wait a bit. I'll take you home. John, Peerybingle, my service to you. More of my service to your pretty wife. Handsome every day? Better too, it possible? And younger," mused the speaker, in a low voice; "that's the devil of it!"

"I should be astonished at your paying compliments, Mr. Tackleton," said Dot, not with the best grace in the world, "but for your condition." "You know all about it then?" "I have got myself to believe it somehow," said Dot.

"After a hard struggle, I suppose?" "Very." Tackleton the toy-merchant, pretty generally known as Gruff and Tackleton—for that was the firm, though Gruff had been bought out long ago; only leaving his name, and as some said his nature, according to its dictionary meaning, in the business—Tackleton the toy-merchant was a man whose vocation had been, quite misunderstood by his parents and guardians. If they had made him a money-lender, or a sharp attorney, or a sheriff's officer, or a broker, he might have sown his discontented oats in his youth, and, after having had the full run of himself in ill-natured transactions, might have turned amiable, at last, for the sake of a little freshness and novelty. But, cramped and chafing in the peaceable pursuit of toy-making, he was a domestic ogre, who had been living on children all his life, and was their implacable enemy. He despised all toys; wouldn't have bought one for the world; delighted, in his malice, to insinuate grim expressions into the faces of brown-paper farmers who drove pigs to market, bell-men who advertised lost lawyers' consciences, movable old ladies who carried stockings or carved sticks and other like samples of his stock-in-trade. In appalling masks, hideous, hairy, red-eyed jacks in boxes, vampire-kites, demoniacal tumblers who wouldn't lie down, and were perpetually flying forward, and stare infants out of countenance; his soul perfectly revelled. There were his only rebel and safety-valve. He was great in such intentions. Anything suggestive of a pony-nightmare was delicious to him. He had even lost money (and he took to that toy very kindly) by getting up goblin slides for magic lanterns, whereon the powers of darkness were depicted as a sort

of supernatural shell-fish, with human faces. In interesting the portraitures of giants, he had sunk quite a little capital; and, though no painter himself, he could indicate, for the instruction of his artists, with a piece of chalk, a certain furtive leer for the countenances of those monsters, that was sale to destroy the peace of mind of any young gentleman between the ages of six and eleven, for the whole Christmas or midsummer vacation.

What he was in toys, he was (as most men are) in other things. You may easily suppose, therefore, that within the great green cape, which reached down to the calves of his legs, and was buttoned up to the chin and uncommonly pleasant fellow; and that he was about as choice a spirit, and as agreeable a companion, as ever stood in a pair of bull-headed-looking boots with mahogany-coloured tops.

Still, Tackleton, the toy-merchant, was going to be married. In spite of all this, he was going to be married. And to a young wife too; a beautiful young wife.

He didn't look much like a bridegroom, as he stood in the carrier's kitchen, with a twist in his dry face, and a screw in his body, and his nose, and his hands stuck down into the bottoms of his pockets, and his whole carcass ill-conditioned self peering out of one little corner of one little eye, like the concentrated essence of any number of ravens. But a bridegroom he designed to be.

"In three days' time," said Tackleton. "The last day of the first month in the year. That's my wedding-day," said Tackleton. "Did I mention that he had always one eye wide open, and the other eye nearly shut; and that the one eye near shut was always the expressive eye? I don't think I did."

"That's my wedding-day," said Tackleton, raising his voice. "Why, it's our wedding-day too," exclaimed the carrier. "Ha ha!" laughed Tackleton. "Ours! You're just such another couple. Just!"

The indignation of Dot at this presumptuous assertion is not to be described. What next? His imagination would compare the possibility of just such another baby, perhaps. The man was mad.

"I say! A word with you," murmured Tackleton, adding the carrier with his elbow, and taking him a little apart. "You'll come to the wedding? We're in the same boat, you know."

"How in the same boat?" inquired the carrier. "A little disparity, you know," said Tackleton, with another nudge. "Come and spend an evening with us, beforehand."

"Why?" demanded John, astonished at this pressing hospitality. "Why?" returned the other. "That's a new way of receiving an invitation. Why, for pleasure—sociability, you know, and all that!"

"I thought you were ever sociable," said John, in his plain way. "Tchah! It's of no use to me anything but free with you, I see," said Tackleton. "Why, then, the truth is you have a sort of a comfortable appearance together, you and your wife. We know better. You know, but—"

"No, we don't know better," interposed John. "What are you talking about?" "Well! We don't know better then," said Tackleton. "We'll agree that we don't. As you like: what does it matter? I was going to say, as you have that sort of appearance, your company will produce a favourable effect on Mrs. Tackleton that will be. And, though I don't think your good lady's very friendly to me, in this matter, still she can't help herself from falling into my views, for there's a compactness and cosiness of appearance about her that always tells, even in an indifferent case. You'll say you'll come?"

"We have arranged to keep our wedding-day (as far as that goes) at home," said John. "We have made the promise to ourselves these six months. We think, you see, that home—"

"Bah! what's home?" cried Tackleton. "Four walls and a ceiling! Why don't you kill that cricket? I would! I always do. I hate their noise. There are four walls and a ceiling at my house. Come to me!"

"You kill your crickets, eh?" said John. "Scrumph 'em, sir," returned the other, setting his heel heavily on the floor. "You'll say you'll come? It's as much your interest as mine, you know, that the women should persuade each other that they're quiet and contented, and couldn't be better off. I know their way. Whatever one woman says, another woman is determined to clinch, always. There's that spirit of emulation among 'em, sir, that if your wife says to my wife, 'I'm the happiest woman in the world, and I do to you, my wife will say the same to yours, or more, and half believe it."

"Do you mean to say she don't, then?" asked the carrier. "Don't," cried Tackleton, with a shot, sharp laugh. "Don't what?" "The carrier had had some faint idea of adding, 'dote upon you.' But happening to meet the half-closed eyes, as it twinkled upon him over the turned-up collar of the cape, which was within an ace of poking it out, he felt it such an unlikely part and

parcel of anything to be doted on, that he substituted, "that she don't believe it."

"Ah, you dog! You're joking," said Tackleton. "But the carrier, though slow to understand the full drift of his meaning, eyed him in such a serious manner, that he was obliged to be a little more explanatory."

"I have the honour," said Tackleton, holding up the fingers of his left hand, and tapping the forefinger, to imply "there I am, Tackleton to wit!" "I have the honour, sir, to marry a young wife, and a pretty wife"—here he rapped his little finger, to express the bride; not sparingly, but sharply, with a sense of power. "I'm able to gratify that honour, and I do. It's my whim. But—now look here."

He pointed to where Dot was sitting, thoughtfully, before the fire, leaning her dimpled chin upon her hand, and watching the bright blaze. The carrier looked at her, and then at him, and then her and then at him again.

"She honours and obeys, no doubt, you know," said Tackleton, "and that, as I am not a man of sentiment, is quite enough for me. But do you think there's anything more in it?"

"I think," observed the carrier, "that I should chuck any man out of window, who said there wasn't." "Exactly so," returned the other, with an unusual alacrity of assent. "To be sure! Doubtless you would. Of course, I'm certain of it. Good-night. Pleasant dreams?"

The good carrier was puzzled, and made uncomfortable and uncertain, in spite of himself. He couldn't help showing it, in his manner. "Good-night, my dear friend!" said Tackleton compassionately. "I'm off. We're exactly alike, in reality. I see. You won't give us to-morrow evening? Well! Next day you go out visiting. I know. I'll meet you there, and bring my wife that is to be. It'll do her good. You're agreeable? Thank her. What's that?"

It was a loud cry from the carrier's wife: a loud, sharp, sudden cry, that made the room ring, like a glass vessel. She had risen from her seat, and stood like one transfixed by terror and surprise. The stranger had advanced towards the fire to warm himself, and stood within a short skirt of her chair. But quiet still.

"Dot!" cried the carrier. "Mary! darling! What's the matter?" They were all about her in a moment. Caleb, who had been dozing on the cake-box, in the first imperfect recovery of his suspended presence of mind, seized Miss Slowboy by the hair of her head, but immediately apologized.

"Mary!" exclaimed the carrier, supporting her in his arms. "Are you ill? What is all? Tell me, dear!"

She only answered by beating her hands together, and falling into a wild fit of laughter. Then, sinking from his grasp upon the ground, she covered her face with her apron, and wept bitterly. And then she laughed again; and then she cried again; and then she said how cold it was, and suffered him to lead her to the fire, where she sat down as before. The old man standing, as before, quite still.

"I'm better, John," she said. "I'm quite well now—I—"

"John!" But John was on the other side of her. Why turn her face towards the strange old gentleman, as if addressing him? Was her brain wandering?

"Only a fancy, John dear—a kind of shock—a something coming suddenly before my eyes—I don't know what it was. It's quite gone; quite gone."

"I'm glad it's gone," muttered Tackleton, turning the expressive eye all round the room. "I wonder where it's gone, and what it was. Hump! Caleb, come here! Who's that with the gray hair?"

"I don't know, sir," returned Caleb in a whisper. "Never seen him before, in all my life. A beautiful figure for a nut-cracker; quite a new model. With a screw-law opening down into his waistcoat, he'd be lovely."

"Not ugly enough," said Tackleton. "Or for a fire-box, either," observed Caleb, in deep contemplation, "put a model! Unscrow his head to what the matches in; turn him heels up for the light; and what a fire-box for a gentleman's mantelshelf, just as he stands!"

"Not half ugly enough," said Tackleton. "Nothing in him at all. Come! Bring that box! All right now, I hope?"

"Oh, quite gone! Quite gone!" said the little woman, waving him hurriedly away. "Good-night!"

So, with another sharp look round the room, he went out at the door, followed by Caleb with the wedding-cake on his head.

The carrier had been so much assailed by his little wife, and so busily engaged in soothing and tending her, that he had scarcely been conscious of the stranger's presence, until now, when he again stood there, their only guest.

"He don't belong to them, you see," said John. "I must give him a hint to go."

"I beg your pardon, friend," said the old gentleman, advancing to him; "the more so, as I fear your wife

has not been well; but the attendant whom my infirmity," he touched his ears; and shook his head, "renders almost indispensable, not having arrived, I fear there must be some mistake. The bad night which made the shelter of your comfortable cart (may I never have worse!) so acceptable, is still as bad as ever. Would you, in your kindness, suffer me to rest a bed here?"

"Yes, yes," cried Dot. "Yes! Certainly!" "Oh!" said the carrier, surprised by the rapidity of this consent. "Well! I don't object; but still I'm not quite sure that—"

"Hush!" she interrupted. "Dear John!" "Why, he's stone deaf," urged John.

"I know he is, but—Yes, sir, certainly. Yes! Certainly—I'll make him up a bed directly, John." As she hurried off to do it, the flutter of her spirits, and the agitation of her manner, were so strange, that the carrier stood looking her, quite confounded.

"Did its mothers make it up a beds then?" cried Miss Slowboy to the baby; "and did its hair grow brown and curly, when its caps was lifted off, and frighten it, a precious pet, as-sitting by the fires?"

With that unaccountable attraction of the mind to trifles, which is often incidental to a state of doubt and confusion, the carrier, as he walked slowly to and fro, found himself mentally repeating even these absurd words, many times. So many times, that he got them by heart, and was still coining them over and over, like a lesson, when Tilly, after administering as much friction to the little bald head with her hand as she thought wholesome (according to the practice of nurses), had once more tied the baby's cap on.

And frighten it a precious pet, as-sitting by the fires. What frighten Dot. I wonder!" mused the carrier, pacing to and fro.

He scooped, from his heart, the insinuations of the toy-merchant; and yet they filled him with a vague, indefinite uneasiness. For Tackleton was quick and sly; and he had that painful sense, himself, of being a man of slow perception, that a broken hint was always worrying to him. He certainly had no intention in his mind of linking anything that Tackleton had said with the unusual conduct of his wife; but the two subjects of reflection came into his mind together, and he could not keep them asunder.

The bed was soon made ready; and the visitor, declining all refreshment but a cup of tea, retired. Then Dot quite well-gone, she said, quite well again—arranged the great chair in the chimney-corner for her husband; filled his pipe and gave it him; and took her usual little stool beside him on the hearth.

She always would sit on that little stool. I think she must have had a kind of notion that it was a coaxing, wheedling little stool.

She was, out and out, the very best filler of a pipe I should say, in the four quarters of the quarters of the globe. To see her put that chubby little finger in the bowl, and then blow down the pipe to clear the tube, and when she had done so, affect to think that there was really something in the tube, and blow a dozen times, and hold it to her eye like a telescope, with a most provoking twist in her capital little face, as she looked down at it, was quite a brilliant thing. As to the tobacco, she was a perfect mistress of the subject; and her lighting of the pipe, with a wisp of paper, when the carrier had it in his mouth—going so very near his nose, and yet not scorching it—was art, high art, sir.

And the cricket and the kettle tuning up, again, acknowledged it. The bright fire, blazing up again, acknowledged it. The little mow on the clock, in his unheeded work, acknowledged it, the readiest of all.

And as he soberly and thoughtfully puffed at his old pipe, and as the red fire gleamed, and as the cricket chimed; that genius of his hearth and home (for such the cricket was) came out, in fairy shape, into the room, and summoned many forms of home about him; Dots of all ages, and all sizes, filled the chamber. Dots were merry children, running on before him gathering flowers, in the fields; coy Dots, half shrinking from, half yielding to, the pleading of his own rough image; newly-married Dots, alighting at the door, and taking wondering possession of the household; motherly little Dots, attended by fatigued Slowboys, bearing babies to be christened; matronly Dots, still young and blooming, watching Dots of daughters, as they danced at rustic balls; fat Dots, encircled and beset by troops of rosy grandchildren, withered Dots, who leaned on sticks, and tottered as they crept along. Old carriers, too, appeared, with blind old Boxes lying at their feet; and newer carts with younger drivers.

But what was that young figure of a man, which the same fairy cricket set so near her stool, and which remained there, singly and alone? Why did it linger still, so near her, with its arm upon the chimney-piece, ever repeating, "Married! and not to me!"

"Oh, Dot! Oh, bailing Dot! There is no place for it in all your husband's visions; why has its shadow fallen on his hearth!"

CHIRP THE SECOND. Caleb Plummer and his blind daughter lived all alone by themselves, as the story-books say, and my blessing, with yours to back it, I hope, on the story-books, for saying anything in this workaday world.

Caleb Plummer and his blind daughter lived all alone by themselves, in a little cracked nutshell of a wooden house, which was, in truth, no better than a pimple on the prominent red-brick nose of Gruff and Tackleton. The premises of Gruff and Tackleton were the great feature of the street; but you might have knocked down Caleb Plummer's dwelling with a hammer or two, and carried off the pieces in a cart.

If any one had done the dwelling-house of Caleb Plummer the honour to miss it after such an insult, it would have been, no doubt, to commend its demolition as a vast improvement. It stuck to the premises of Gruff and Tackleton, like a barnacle to a ship's keel, or a snail to a door, or a little bunch of toadstools to the stem of a tree. But it was the germ from which the full-grown trunk of Gruff and Tackleton had sprung; and under its crazy roof, the Gruff before last, had, in a small way, made toys for a generation of old boys and girls, who had played with them and found them out, and broken them, and gone to sleep.

I have said that Caleb and his poor blind daughter lived here; but I should have said that Caleb lived here, and his poor blind daughter somewhere else—in an enchanted home of Caleb's, where scarcity and shabbiness were not, and trouble never entered. Caleb was no scrounger, but in the only magic art that still remains to us, the magic of devoted, deathless love, Nature had been the mistress of his study; and from her teaching, all the wonder came.

The blind girl never knew that ceilings were discoloured, walls blotched and bare of plaster here and there, high crevices unstoppered, and widening every day, beams mouldering and tending downward. The blind girl never knew that iron was rusting, wood rotting, paper peeling off, the size, and shape, and true proportion of the dwelling, withering away. The blind girl never knew that ugly shapes of delf and earthenware were on the board; that sorrow and faint-heartedness were in the house; that Caleb's scanty hairs were turning gray and more gray; before her sightless face. The blind girl never knew that Tackleton was Tackleton in short; but lived in the belief of an eccentric humorist who loved to have his jest with them, and who, while he was the guardian angel of their lives, disdained to hear one word of thankfulness.

And all was Caleb's doing; all the doing of her simple father! But he too had a cricket on his hearth; and listening sadly to its music when the motherless blind child was very young, that spirit had inspired him with the thought that, even her great deprivation might be almost changed into a blessing, and the girl made happy by these little means. For all the cricket tribe are potent spirits, even though the people who hold converse with them do not know it (which is frequently the case); and there are not in the unseen world, voices more gentle and more true; that may be so implicitly relied on, or that are so certain to give none but tenderest counsel; as the voices in which the spirits of the fireside and the hearth address themselves to human kind.

Caleb and his daughter were at work together in their usual working-room, which served them for their ordinary living-room as well; and a strange place it was. There were houses in it, finished and unfinished, for dolls of all stations in life. Suburban tenements for dolls of moderate means; kitchens and single apartments for dolls of the lower classes; capital town residences for dolls of high estate. Some of these establishments were already finished according to estimate, with a view to the convenience of dolls of limited income; others could be fitted on the most expensive scale, at a moment's notice, from whole shelves of chairs and tables; sofas, bedsteads, and upholstery. The nobility and gentry and public in general, for whose accommodation these tenements were designed, lay, here and there, in baskets, staring straight up at the ceiling; but, in denoting their degrees in society, and confining them to their respective stations (which experience shows to be lamentably difficult in real life), the makers of these dolls had far improved on Nature, who is often forward and perverse; for they, not resting on such arbitrary marks as satin, cotton-print, and bits of rag, had superadded striking personal differences, which allowed of no mistake. Thus, the doll-lady of distinction had long limbs of perfect symmetry; but only she and her compeers. The next

grade in the social scale being made of leather, and the next of coarse linen stuff. As to the common people, they had just so many matches out of tinder-boxes, for their arms and legs, and there they were—established in their sphere at once, beyond the possibility of getting out of it.

There were various other samples of his handicraft besides dolls in Caleb Plummer's room. There were Noah's arks, in which birds and beasts were an uncommonly tight fit, I assure you; though they could be crammed in, anyhow, at the roof, and rattled and shaken into the smallest compass. By a bold poetical licence, most of these Noah's arks had knockers on the doors; inconsistent appendages perhaps, as suggestive of morning callers and a postman, yet a pleasant finish to the outside of the building. There were scores of melancholy little carts, which, when the wheels went round, performed most doleful music. Many small fiddles, drums, and other instruments of torture; no end of cannon, shields, swords, spears, and guns. There were little numbers in red breeches, incessantly swarming up high obstacles of red-tape, and coming down, head first, on the other side; and there were innumerable old gentlemen of respectable, not to say venerable, appearance, incessantly giving over horizontal pipes, inserted for the purpose, in their own street doors. There were bears of all sorts; horses, in particular, of every breed, from the spotted barrel on four pegs, with a small, tippet for a mane, to the thoroughbred rocker, on his highest mien. As it would have been hard to count the dozens upon dozens of grotesque figures, that were ever ready to commit all sorts of absurdities on the turning of a handle, so it would have been no easy task to mention any human folly, vice, or weakness, that had not its type, immediate or remote, in Caleb Plummer's room. And not in an exaggerated form, for very little handles will move men and women to as strange performances, as any toy was ever made to undertake.

In the midst of all these objects, Caleb and his daughter sat at work. The blind girl busy as a doll's dressmaker; Caleb painting and glazing the four-pair front of a desirable family mansion.

The care imprinted in the lines of Caleb's face, and his absorbed and dreamy manner, which would have sat well on some alchemist or abstruse student, were at first sight an odd contrast to his occupation, and the trivialities about him. But trivial things, invented and pursued for bread, become very serious matters of fact; and, apart from this consideration, I am not at all prepared to say, myself, that if Caleb had been a lord chamberlain, or a member of parliament, or a lawyer, or even a great speculator, he would have dealt in toys one whit less whimsical, while I have a very great doubt whether they would have been as harmless.

"So you were out in the rain last night, father, in your beautiful new greatcoat," said Caleb's daughter. "In my beautiful new greatcoat," answered Caleb, glancing towards a clothes-line in the room, on which the sackcloth garment previously described, was carefully hung up to dry.

"And of such a tailor too," said Caleb. "Quite a fashionable tailor. It's too good for me."

The blind girl rested from her work, and laughed with delight. "Too good, father! What can be too good for you?"

"I'm half ashamed to wear it though," said Caleb, watching the effect of what he said, upon her brightening face; "upon my word! When I hear the boys and people say behind me, 'Hollo! Here's a swell!' I don't know which way to look. And when I said I was a very common man, said 'No, your honour! Bless your honour, don't say that! I was quite ashamed. I really felt as if I hadn't a right to wear it.'"

"Happy blind girl! How merry she was, in her exultation!" "I see you, father," she said, clasping her hands. "As plainly, as if I had the eyes I never want when you are with me. I love you!"

"Bright blue," said Caleb. "Yes, yes!" "Bright blue," exclaimed the girl, turning up her radiant face; "the colour I can just remember in the blessed sky! You told me it was blue before. A bright blue coat!"

"Made loose to the figure," suggested Caleb. "Yes! loose to the figure!" cried the blind girl, laughing heartily; "and in it, you, dear father, with your merry eye, your smiling face, your free step, and your dark hair—looking so young and handsome!"

"Hollo! Hollo!" said Caleb. "I shall be vain, presently." "I think you are, already," cried the blind girl, pointing at him, in her glee. "I know you, father! Ha, ha, ha! I've found you out, you see!"

How different the picture in her mind, from Caleb, as he sat observing her! She had spoken of his free step. She was right in that. For years, he had never once crossed that threshold at his own slow pace; but with a footfall counterfeited for her ear; and never had he, when his heart was heaviest, forgotten the light tread that was to render her so cheerful and courageous!

Heaven knows! But I think Caleb's vague bewilderment of manner may have had originated in his having confused himself about himself, and everything around him, for the love of his blind daughter. How could the little man be otherwise than bewildered, after labouring for so many years to destroy his own identity, and that of all the objects that had any bearing on it?

"There we are," said Caleb, falling back a pace or two to form the better judgment of his work. "near the real thing as sixpennorth of halfpence is to sixpence. What a pity that the whole front of the house opens at once! If there was only a staircase in it, now, and regular doors to the rooms to go in at! But that's the worst of my calling. I'm always deluding myself, and swindling myself."

"You're speaking quite softly. You are not tired, father?" "Tired," echoed Caleb, with a great burst of animation, "what should tire me, Bertha? I was never tired. What does it mean?"

To give the greater force to his words, he checked himself in an involuntary imitation of two half-lengths stretching and yawning figures on the mantel shelf, who were represented as in one eternal state of weariness from the waist upwards; and hummed a fragment of a song. It was a Bacharachian song, something about a sparkling bowl; and he sang it with an assumption of devil-may-care voice, that made his face a thousand times more meagre and more thoughtful than ever.

"What! You're singing, are you?" said Tackleton, putting his head in at the door. "Go fit! I can't sing."

Nobody would have suspected him of it. He hadn't what is generally termed a singing face, by any means. "I can't afford to sing," said Tackleton. "I'm glad you can. I hope you can afford to work too. Hardly time for both, I should think."

"If you could only see him, Bertha, how he's winking at me!" whispered Caleb. "Such a man to joke; you'd think, if you didn't know him, he was in earnest—wouldn't you now?"

The blind girl smiled and nodded. "The bird that can sing, and won't sing, must be made to sing, they say," grumbled Tackleton. "What about the owl that can't sing, and oughtn't to sing, and will sing; is there anything that he should be made to do?"

"The extent to which he's winking at this moment," whispered Caleb to his daughter. "Oh, my gracious! Always merry and high-hearted with us!" cried the smiling Bertha. "Oh! you're there, are you?" answered Tackleton. "Poor idiot! He really did believe she was an idiot; and he founded the belief, I can't say whether consciously or not, upon her being fond of him."

"Well; and being there—how are you?" said Tackleton, in his grudging way. "Oh! well; quite well. And as happy as even you can wish me to be. As happy as you would make the whole world, if you could."

"Poor idiot!" muttered Tackleton. "No gleam of reason. Not a gleam!" The blind girl took his hand, and kissed it; held it for a moment in her own two hands; and laid her cheek against it tenderly, before releasing it. There was such unspoken affection and such fervent gratitude in the act, that Tackleton himself was moved to say, in a milder growl than usual—

"What's the matter now?" "I stood it close beside my pillow when I went to sleep last night, and remembered it in my dreams. And when the day broke, and the glorious red sun—the red sun, father?"

"Red in the mornings and the evenings, Bertha. Said poor Caleb, with a woe-fallen glaze at his employer. "When it rose, and the bright light I almost fear to strike myself against in walking, came into the room, I turned the little tree towards it, and blessed Heaven for making things so precious, and blessed you for sending them to cheer me!"

"Bedlam, broke loose!" said Tackleton, under his breath. "We shall arrive at the straw-waistcoat and mufflers soon. We're getting on!" Caleb, with his hands hooked loosely in each other, stared vacantly before him while his daughter spoke; as if he really were uncertain (I believe he was) whether Tackleton had done anything to deserve her thanks or not. If he could have been a perfectly free agent, at that moment required, on pain of death, to be the toy-merchant, or fall at his feet according to his merits, I believe would have been an even chance which course he would have taken. Verily, Caleb knew that with his hands he had brought the little tree home for her; so carefully that with his own lips he had, by the innocent deception which he had used to keep her from suspecting much, how very much he even denied himself, that she might be happier.

"Bertha!" said Tackleton, "ing for the house, a little one. Come here."

"Oh! I can come straight. You needn't guide me," she said. "Shall I tell you a secret then?"

(Continued on Page 12)

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THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH.

(Continued from Page 11.)

"If you will," she answered eagerly.

How bright the darkened face! How adorned with light, the listening head!

"This is the day on which little what's-her-name, the spoiled child, Peerybingle's wife, pays her regular visit to you—makes her fantastic picnic here; ain't it?" said Tackleton, with a strong expression of dislike for the whole concern.

"Yes," replied Bertha. "This is the day."

"I thought so," said Tackleton. "I should like to join the party."

"Do you hear that, father?" cried the blind girl, in an ecstasy.

"Yes, yes, I hear it," murmured Caleb, with the fixed look of a sleep-walker; "but I don't believe it. It's one of my lies, I've no doubt."

"You see, I—I want to bring the Peerybingle's a little more into company with May Fiedling," said Tackleton. "I am going to be married to May."

"Married?" cried the blind girl, starting from him.

"She's such a con-founded idiot," muttered Tackleton, "that I was afraid she'd never comprehend me. Ah, Bertha! Married! Church, parson, clerk, beads, glass coach, bells, breakfast, bride-cake, favours, marrow-bones, cleavers and all the rest of the romances. A wedding, you know! a wedding. Don't you know what a wedding is?"

"I know," replied the blind girl, in a gentle tone. "I understand it."

"Do you?" muttered Tackleton. "It's more than I expected. Well! On that account I want to join the party, and to bring May and her mother. I'll send in a little something or other, before the afternoon. A cold leg of mutton, or some comfortable raffle of that sort. You'll expect me?"

"Yes," she answered. She had drooped her head, and turned away; and so stood, with her hands crossed, musing.

"I don't think you will," muttered Tackleton, looking at her; "for you seem to have forgotten all about it already. Caleb?"

"I may venture to say I'm here, I suppose," thought Caleb. "Sir!"

"Take care she don't forget what I've been saying to her," returned Caleb. "It's one of the few things she ain't clever in."

"Every man thinks his own geese

swans," observed the toy-merchant, with a shrug. "Poor devil!"

Having delivered himself of which remark, with infinite contempt, old Griff and Tackleton withdrew.

Bertha remained where he had left her, lost in meditation. The gaiety had vanished from her downcast face, and it was very sad. Three or four times she shook her head, as if de-waiting some remembrance or some loss; but her sorrowful reflections found no vent in words.

It was not until Caleb had been occupied some time, in yoking a team of horses to a wagon by the summary process of nailing the harness to the vital parts of their bodies, that she drew near to his working-stool, and sitting down beside him, said—

"Father, I am lonely in the dark. I want my eyes—my patient, willing eyes."

"Here they are," said Caleb. "Always ready. They are more yours than mine, Bertha, any hour in the four-and-twenty. What shall your eyes do for you, dear?"

"Look round the room, father."

"All right," said Caleb. "No sooner said than done, Bertha."

"Tell me about it."

"It's much the same as usual," said Caleb. "Homely, but very snug. The gay colours on the walls; the bright flowers on the plates and dishes; the shining wood, where there are beams or panels; the general cheerfulness and neatness of the building, make it very pretty."

Cheerful and neat it was, wherever Bertha's hands could busy themselves. But nowhere else were cheerfulness and neatness possible. In the old crazy shed which Caleb's fancy so transformed.

"You have your working-dress on, and are not so gallant as when you wear the handsome coat," said Bertha, touching him.

"No, quite so gallant," answered Caleb. "Pretty brisk though."

"Father," said the blind girl, drawing close to his side, and stealing one arm round his neck. "Tell me something about May. She is very fair?"

"She is indeed," said Caleb. "And she was indeed. It was quite a rare thing to Caleb, not to have to draw on his invention."

"Her hair is dark," said Bertha pensively. "Darker than mine. Her voice is sweet and musical, I know. I have often loved to hear it. Her shape—"

"There's not a doll's in all the room to equal it," said Caleb. "And her eyes—"

"He stopped, for Bertha had drawn closer round his neck, and, from the arm that clung about him, came a

warning pressure which he understood too well.

"He coughed a moment, hammered for a moment, and then fell back upon the song about the sparkling bowl; his infallible resource in all such difficulties."

"Our friend, father, our benefactor. I am never tired, you know, of hearing about him. Now, was I ever?" she said hastily.

"Of course not," answered Caleb, "and with reason."

"Ah! With how much reason!" cried the blind girl, with such ferocity, that Caleb, though his motives were so pure, could not endure to meet her face; but dropped his eyes, as if she could have read in them his innocent deceit.

"Then tell me again about him, dear father," said Bertha. "Many times again! His face is benevolent, kind, and tender. Honest and true, I am sure it is. The manly heart that tries to cloak all favours with a show of roughness and unwillingness, beats in its every look and glance."

"And makes it noble," added Caleb, in his quiet desperation.

"And makes it noble!" cried the blind girl. "He is older than May, father."

"Yes," said Caleb reluctantly. "He's a little older than May. But that don't signify."

"Oh, father, yes! To be his patient companion in infirmity and age; to be his gentle nurse in sickness, and his constant friend in suffering and sorrow; to know no weariness in working for his sake; to watch him, tend him, sit beside his bed and talk to him awake, and pray for him asleep; what privileges these would be! What opportunities for proving all her truth and her devotion to him! Would she do all this, dear father?"

"No doubt of it," said Caleb. "I love her, father! I can love her from my soul!" exclaimed the blind girl. And saying so, she laid her poor blind face on Caleb's shoulder, and so wept and wept, that he was almost sorry to have brought that fearful happiness upon her.

In the meantime, there had been a pretty sharp commotion at John Peerybingle's; for little Mrs. Peerybingle, naturally couldn't think of going anywhere without the baby; and to get the baby under weight took time. Not that there was much of the baby, speaking of it as a thing of weight and measure; but there was a vast deal to do about and about it, and it all had to be done by easy stages. For instance: when the baby was got by hook and by crook, to a certain point of dressing, and you might have rationally supposed that another touch or two would finish

him off, and turn him out a tip-top baby challenging the world, he was unexpectedly extinguished in a flaming cap, and hustled off to bed; where he snuggled (so to speak) between two blankets for the best part of an hour. From this state of inaction he was then recalled, shivering very much and roaring violently, to partake of a well! I would rather say, if you'll permit me to speak generally—of a slight repast. After which, he went to sleep again. Mrs. Peerybingle took advantage of this interval, to make herself as smart in all your life; and, during the same short truce, Miss Slowboy insinuated herself into a Spencer of a fashion so surprising and ingenious, that it had no connection with herself, or anything else in the universe; but was a shrunken, dog-eared, independent fact, pursuing its lonely course without the least regard to anybody. By this time, the baby, being all alive again, was invested, by the united efforts of Mrs. Peerybingle and Miss Slowboy, with a cream-coloured mantle for its body, and a sort of nankeen raised-pie for its head; and so, in course of time, they all three got down to the door, where the old horse had already taken more than the full value of his day's toll out of the Turnpike Trust, by tearing up the road with his impatient autographs; and whence Boxer might be dimly seen in the remote perspective, standing looking back, and tempting him to come on without orders.

As to the chair, or anything of that kind for helping Mrs. Peerybingle into the cart, you know very little of John, I flatter myself, if you think that was necessary. Before you could have seen him lift her from the ground, there she was in her place, fresh and rosy, saying, "John! How can you? Think of Tilly!"

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"I am sorry for it, John," said Dot, in a great bustle, "but I really could not think of going to Bertha's—I would not do it, John, on any account—without the veal-and-ham pie and things, and the bottles of beer. Way!"

This monosyllable was addressed to the horse, who didn't mind it at all.

"Oh, Jo way, John!" said Mrs. Peerybingle. "Please!"

"It'll be time enough to do that," returned John, "when I begin to leave things behind me. The baker's here, safe enough."

"What a hard-hearted monster you must be, John, not to have said so, at once, and saved me such a turn! I declare I wouldn't go to Bertha's without the veal-and-ham pie and things, and the bottles of beer, for any money. Regularly once a fortnight ever since we have been married, John, have we made our little picnic there. If anything was to go wrong with it, I should almost think we were never to be lucky again."

"It was a kind thought in the first instance," said the carrier; "and I honour you for it, little woman."

"My dear John," replied Dot, turning very red, "don't talk about honouring me. Good gracious!"

"By the bye," observed the carrier, "that old gentleman—"

"Again so visibly, and instantly embarrassed," said the carrier, "looking straight along the road before them. 'I can't make him out. I don't believe there's any harm in him.'"

"None at all. I'm—I'm sure there's none at all."

"Yes?" said the carrier, with his eyes attracted to her face by the great earnestness of her manner. "I am glad you feel so certain of it, because it's a confirmation to me. It's curious that he should have taken it into his head to ask leave to go on lodging with us; ain't it? Things come about so strangely."

"So very strangely," she rejoined, in a low voice, scarcely audible.

"However, he's a good-natured old gentleman," said John, "and pays as a gentleman, and I think his word is to be relied upon, like a gentleman's. I had quite a long talk with him this morning; he can hear me better already, he says, as he gets more used to my voice. He told me a great deal about himself, and I told him a good deal about myself, and a rare lot of questions, he asked me. I gave him information about my having two bears, you know, in my business; one day to the right from our house and back again; another day to the left from our house and back again; for he's a stranger and don't

know the names of places about here; and he seemed quite pleased. 'Why, then I shall be returning home to-night your way,' he says. 'When I thought you'd be coming in an exactly opposite direction. That's capital! I may trouble you for another lift perhaps, but I'll engage not to fall so sound asleep again.' He was sound asleep, sure—ly!—Dot! what are you thinking of?"

"Thinking of, John? I—was listening to you."

"Oh! That's all right!" said the honest carrier. "I was afraid, from the look of your face, that I had gone rambling on so long, as to set you thinking about something else. I was very near it, I'll be bound."

Dot making no reply, they jogged on, for some little time, in silence. But it was not easy to remain silent very long in John Peerybingle's cart, for everybody on the road had something to say, and though it might only be, "How are you?" and indeed it was very often nothing else, still, to give that back again in the right spirit of cordiality, required, not merely a nod and a smile, but as wholesome an action of the lungs withal, as a long-winded parliamentary speech. Sometimes passengers on foot, or horseback, plodded on a little way beside the cart, for the express purpose of having a chat; and there was a great deal to be said on both sides.

Then Boxer gave occasion to more good-natured recognitions of, and by the carrier, than half a dozen Christians could have done. Everybody knew him, all along the road—especially the fowls and pigs, who, when they saw him approaching, with his body all on one side, and his ears pricked up inquisitively, and that knob of a tail making the most of itself in the air, immediately withdrew into remote back settlements, without waiting for the honour of a nearer acquaintance. He had business everywhere; going down all the turnings, looking into all the wells, bolting in and out of all the cottages, dashing into the midst of all the dame-schools, fluttering all the pigeons, magnifying the tails of all the cats, and trotting into the public-houses like a regular customer. Wherever he went, somebody or other might have heard to cry, "Hallo! Here's Boxer!" and out came that somebody forthwith, accompanied by at least two or three other somebodies, to give John Peerybingle and his pretty wife, good-day. The packages and parcels for the errand cart were numerous; and there were many stoppages to take them in and give them out, which were not by any means the worst parts of the journey. Some people were so full of expectation about their parcels, and

other people were so full of wonder about their parcels, and other people were so full of inexhaustible directions about their parcels, and John had such a lively interest in all the parcels, that it was as good as a play. Likewise, there were articles to carry, which required to be considered and discussed, and in reference to the adjustment and disposition of which, councils had to be held by the carrier and the senders; at which Boxer usually assisted, in short fits of the closest attention, and long fits of tearing round and round the assembled sages and barking himself hoarse. Of all these little incidents, Dot was the amused and open-eyed spectator from her chair in the cart; and as she sat there, looking on—a charming little portrait framed in admiration by the mill—there was no lack of nudgings and glances and whisperings and envious among the younger men. I promise you. And this delighted John the carrier beyond measures; for he was proud to have his little wife admired, knowing that she didn't mind it—that, if anything, she rather liked it, perhaps.

The trip was a little foggy, to be sure, in the January weather; and was raw and cold. But who cared for such trifles? Not Dot, decidedly. Not Tilly Slowboy, for she deemed sitting in a cart, on any terms, to be the highest point of human joys; the crowning circumstance of earthly hopes. Not the baby, I'll be sworn; for it's not in baby nature to be warmer or more sound asleep, though its capacity is great in both respects, than that blessed young Peerybingle was, all the way.

You couldn't see very far in the fog, of course; but you could see a great deal, oh, a great deal! It's astonishing how much you may see, in a thicker fog than that. If you will only take the trouble to look for it. Why, even to sit watching for the fairy-rings in the fields, and for the patches of hoar-frost still lingering in the shade, near hedges and by trees, was a pleasant occupation—no make no mention of the unexpected shapes in which the trees themselves came starting out of the mist, and glided into it again. The hedges were tangled and bare, and waved a multitude of blighted garlands in the wind; but there was no discouragement in this. It was agreeable to contemplate; for it made the fireside warmer in possession, and the summer greener in expectancy. The river looked chilly; but it was in motion, and moving at a good pace—which was a great point. The canal was rather slow and torpid; that must be admitted. Never mind. It would freeze the sooner when the frost set.

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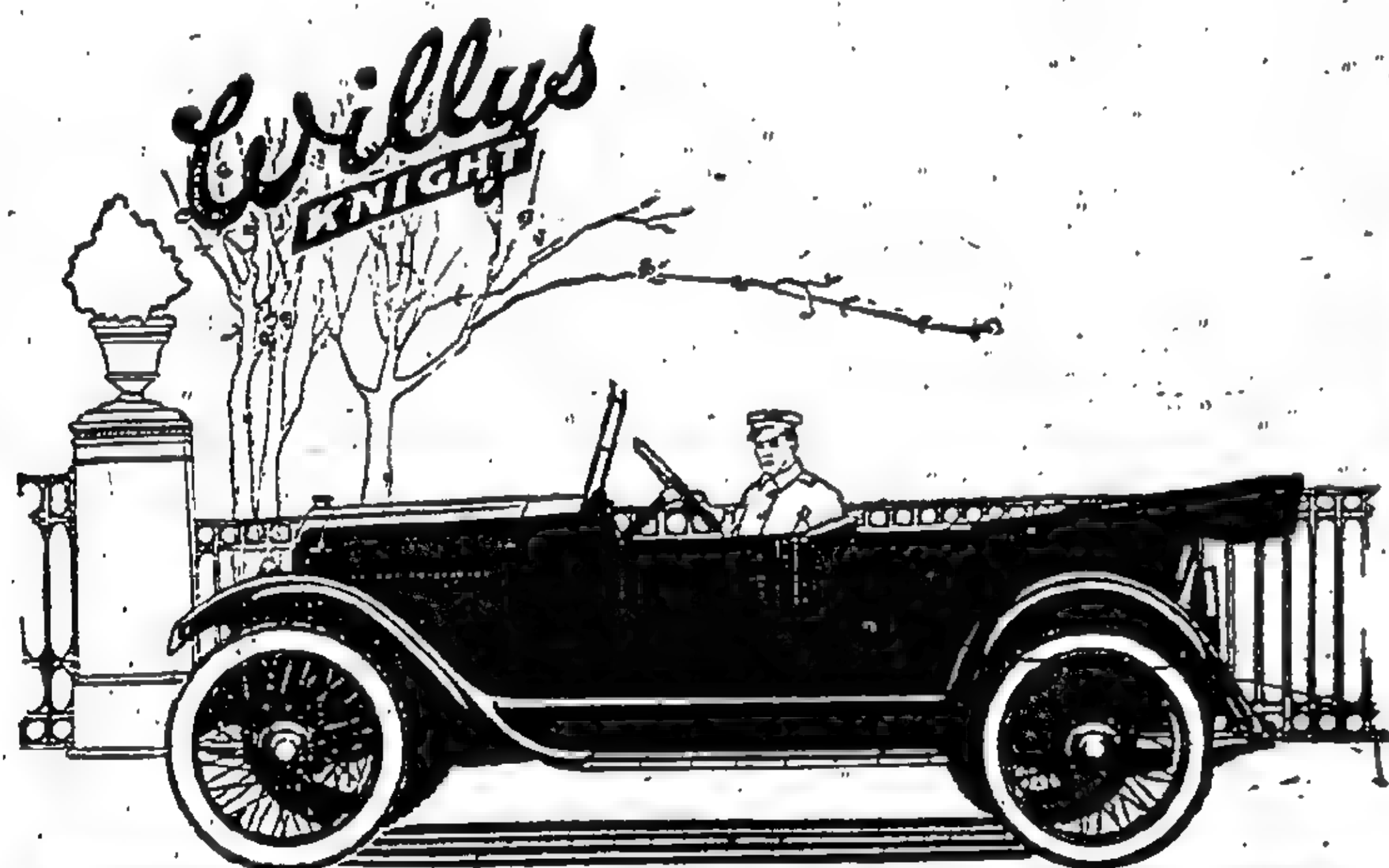
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"THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH."

(Continued from Page 13.)

fairly in, and then there would be skating, and sliding; and the heavy old barges, frozen up somewhere near a wharf, would smoke their rusty iron chimney-pipes all day, and have a lazy time of it.

In one place, there was a great mound of weeds or stubble burning, and they watched the fire, so white in the day-time, flaring through the fog, with only here and there a dash of red in it, until, in consequence as she observed of the smoke "getting up her nose," Miss Slowboy choked—she could do anything of that sort on the smallest provocation—and woke the baby, who couldn't go to sleep again. But Boxer, who was in advance some quarter of a mile or so, had already passed the outskirts of the town, and gained the corner of the street where Caleb and his daughter lived; and long before they had reached the door, he and the blind girl were on the pavement waiting to receive them.

Boxer, by the way, made certain delicate distinctions of his own, in his communication with Bertha, which persuaded her fully that he knew her to be blind. He never sought to attract her attention by looking at her, as he often did with other people, but touched her invariably. What experience he could ever have had of blind people or blind dogs, I don't know. He had never lived with a blind master; nor had Mr. Boxer the elder, nor Mrs. Boxer, nor any of his respectable family on either side, ever been visited with blindness, that I am aware of. He may have found it out for himself, perhaps, but he had got hold of it somehow; and therefore he had hold of Bertha too, by the skirt, and kept hold, until Mrs. Peerybingle and the baby, and Miss Slowboy, and the basket, were all got safely within doors.

May Fielding was already come, and so was her mother—a little querulous chip of an old lady with a peevish face, who, in right of having preserved a waist like a bedpost, was supposed to be a most transcendent figure; and who, in consequence of having once been better off, or of labouring under an impression which she might have been, if something had happened which never did happen, and seemed to have never been particularly likely to come to pass—but it's all the same—was very genteel and patronising indeed. Gruff and Tackleton was also there, doing the agreeable, with the evident sensation of being as perfectly at home

and as unquestionably in his own element, as a fresh young salmon on the top of the Great Pyramid.

"May! My dear old friend!" cried Dot, running up to meet her. "What a happiness to see you!"

Her old friend was, to the full, as hearty and as glad as she; and it really was, if you'll believe me, quite a pleasant sight to see them embrace. Tackleton was a man of taste, beyond all question. May was very pretty.

You know sometimes, when you are used to a pretty face, how, when it comes into contact and comparison with another pretty face, it seems for the moment to be homely and faded, and hardly to deserve the high opinion you have had of it. Now, this was not at all the case, either with Dot or May; for May's face set off Dot's, and Dot's face set off May's, so naturally and agreeably that, as John Peerybingle was very near saying when he came into the room, they ought to have been born sisters—which was the only improvement you could have suggested.

Tackleton had brought his leg of mutton, and, wonderful to relate, a tart besides—but we don't mind a little dissipation when our brides are in the case: we don't get married every day—and in addition to these dainties there were the veal-and-ham pie, and "things," as Mrs. Peerybingle called them: which were chiefly nuts and oranges, and cakes, and such small deer. When the repast was set forth on the board, flanked by Caleb's contribution, which was a great wooden bowl of smoking potatoes (he was prohibited, by solemn compact, from producing any other viands), Tackleton led his intended mother-in-law to the post of honour. For the better gracing of this place at the high festival, the majestic old soul had adorned herself with a cap, calculated to inspire the thoughtless with sentiments of awe. She also wore her gloves. But let us be genteel, or die!

Caleb sat next to his daughter; Dot and her old school-fellow were side by side; the good carrier took care of the bottom of the table. Miss Slowboy was isolated, for the time being, from every article of furniture but the chair she sat on, that she might have nothing else to knock the baby's head against.

As Tilly stared about her at the dolls and toys, they stared at her and at the company. The venerable old gentlemen at the street doors (who were all in full action) showed especial interest in the party, pausing occasionally before leaving, as if they were listening to the conversation, and then plunging wildly over and over, a great many times, without halting for

breath—as in a frantic state of delight with the whole proceedings.

Certainly, if these old gentlemen were inclined to have fiendish joy in the contemplation of Tackleton's discomfort, they had good reason to be satisfied. Tackleton couldn't get on at all; and the more cheerful his intended bride became in Dot's society, the less he liked it, though he had brought them together for that purpose. For he was a regular dog in the manger, was Tackleton; and when they laughed, and he couldn't, he took it into his head, immediately, that they must be laughing at him. "Ah, May!" said Dot. "Dear, dear, what changes! To talk of those merry school-days makes one young again."

"Why, you ain't particularly old, at any time; are you?" said Tackleton.

"Look at my sober, plodding husband there," returned Dot. "He adds twenty years to my age at least. Don't you, John?"

"Forty," John replied.

"How many you'll add to May's, I am sure I don't know," said Dot, laughing. "But she can't be much less than a hundred years of age on her next birthday."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Tackleton. Hollow as a drum, that laugh though. And he looked as if he could have twisted Dot's neck, comfortably.

"Dear, dear!" said Dot. "Only to remember how we used to talk, at school, about the husbands we would choose. I don't know how young, and how handsome, and how gay, and how lively, mine was not to be! Any as to May's—Ah, dear! I don't know whether to laugh or cry, when I think what silly girls we were."

May seemed to know which to do; for the colour flashed into her face, and tears stood in her eyes.

"Even the very persons themselves—real live young men—we fixed on sometimes," said Dot. "We little thought how things would come about. I never fixed on John, I'm sure; I never so much as thought of him. And if I had told you, you were ever to be married, to Mr. Tackleton, why you'd have slapped me. Wouldn't you, May?"

Though May didn't say yes, she certainly didn't say no, or express no, by any means.

Tackleton laughed—quite shouted, he laughed so loud. John Peerybingle laughed too, in his ordinary good-natured and contented manner; but his was a mere whisper of a laugh, to Tackleton's.

"You couldn't help yourselves, for all that. You couldn't resist us, you see," said Tackleton. "Here we are! Here we are! Where are your gay young bridegrooms now?"

"Some of them are dead," said Dot; "and some of them forgotten. Some of them, if they could stand among us at this moment, would not believe we were the same creatures; but the solid, steady-going article—wouldn't believe that what they saw and heard was real, and we could forget them so. Ho! they would not believe one word of it!"

"Why, Dot?" exclaimed the carrier. "Little woman?"

She had spoken with such earnestness and fire, that she stood in need of some recalling to herself, without doubt. Her husband's cheek was very gentle, for he merely interferred, as he supposed, to shield old Tackleton; but it proved effectual, for she stopped, and said no more. There was an uncommon agitation, even in her silence, which the wary Tackleton, who had brought his half-shut eye to bear upon her, noted closely, and remembered to some purpose too.

May uttered no word, good or bad, but sat quite still, with her eyes cast down, and made no sign of interest in what had passed. The good lady her mother now interposed, observing, in the first instance, that girls were girls, and bygones bygones, and that so long as young people were young and thoughtful, they would probably conduct themselves like young and thoughtful persons, with two or three other positions of a no less sound and incontrovertible character. She then remarked, in a devout spirit, that she thanked Heaven she had always found in her daughter May, a dutiful and obedient child; for which she took no credit to herself, though she had every reason to believe it was entirely owing to herself. With regard to Mr. Tackleton she said, that he was in a moral point of view an undeniable individual; and that he was in an eligible point of view a son-in-law to be desired, no one in their senses could doubt. (She was very emphatic here.)

With regard to the family into which he was so soon about, after some solicitation, to be admitted, she believed Mr. Tackleton knew that, although reduced in purse, it had some pretensions to gentility; and that if certain circumstances, not wholly unconnected, she would go so far as to say, with the indigo trade, but to which she would not more particularly refer, had happened differently, it might perhaps have been in possession of wealth. She then remarked that she would not allude to the past, and would not mention that her daughter had for some time rejected the suit of Mr. Tackleton; and that she would not say a great many other things which she did not say, at great length. Finally, she delivered it as the general result of her observation and experience, that those marriages

in which there was least of what was romantically and silly called love, were always the happiest; and that she anticipated the greatest possible amount of bliss—not rapturous bliss, but the solid, steady-going article—from the approaching nuptials. She concluded by informing the company that to-morrow was the day she had lived for, expressly; and that when it was over, she would desire nothing better than to be packed up and disposed of, in any genteel place of burial.

As these remarks were quite unanswerable—which is the happy property of all remarks that are sufficient to the current of the conversation, and diverted the general attention to the veal-and-ham pie, the cold mutton, the potatoes, and the tart. In order that the bottled beer might not be slighted, John Peerybingle proposed to-morrow—the wedding day; and called upon them to drink a bumper to it, before he proceeded on his journey.

For you ought to know that he only rested there, and gave the old horse a bait. He had to go some four or five miles farther on; and when he returned in the evening, he called for Dot, and took another rest on his way home. This was the order of the day on all the picnic occasions, and had been ever since their institution.

There were two persons present, besides the bride and bridegroom elect, who did but indifferent honour to the toast. One of these was Dot, too flushed and discomposed to adapt herself to any small occurrence of the moment; the other, Bertha, who rose up hurriedly, before the rest, and left the table.

"Good-bye," said stout John Peerybingle, pulling on his dreadnought coat. "I shall be back at the old time. Good-bye, all!"

"Good-bye, John!" returned Caleb. He seemed to say it by rote, and to wave his hand in the same unconscious manner; for he stood observing Bertha with an anxious, wondering face, that never altered its expression.

"Good-bye, young shaver!" said the jolly carrier, bending down to kiss the child; which Tilly Slowboy, now intent upon her knife and fork, had deposited asleep (and strange to say, without damage) in a little cot of Bertha's furnishing; "good-bye! Time will come, when you'll turn out into the cold, my little friends; and leave your old father to enjoy his pipe and his rheumatics in the chimney-corner; eh? Where's Dot?"

"I'm here, John!" she said, starting.

"Come, come!" returned the carrier, clapping his sounding hands. "Where's the pipe?"

"I quite forgot the pipe, John." "Forgot the pipe? Was such a wonder ever heard of? She! Forgot the pipe?"

"I'll—I'll fill it directly. It's soon done."

But it was not so soon done, either. It lay in the usual place—the carrier's great pocket—with the little pouch, her own work, from which she was used to fill it; but her hand shook so, that she entangled it (and yet her hand was small enough to have come out easily, I am sure), and bungled terribly. The filling of the pipe and lighting it—those little offices in which I have commended her discretion—were vilely done, and when it came to the whole process, Tackleton stood looking on maliciously with the half-closed eye; which, whenever it met hers—or caught it, for it can hardly be said to have ever met another eye, rather being a kind of trap to snatch it up—augmented her confusion in a most remarkable degree.

"Why, what a clumsy Dot you are, this afternoon!" said John. "I could have done it better myself. I verily believe!"

With these good-natured words, he strode away, and presently was heard, in company with Boxer, and the old horse, and the cart, making lively music down the road. What time the dreamy Caleb still stood, watching his blind daughter, with the same expression on his face.

"Bertha!" said Caleb softly. "What has happened? How changed you are, my darling, in a few hours—since this morning. You silent and dull all day? What is it? Tell me!"

"Oh, father, father!" cried the blind girl, bursting into tears. "Oh, my hard, hard fate!"

Caleb drew his hand across his eyes before he answered her.

"But think how cheerful and how happy you have been, Bertha! How good, and how much loved, by many people."

"That strikes me to the heart, dear father! Always so mindful of me! Always so kind to me!"

Caleb was very much perplexed to understand her.

"To be—to be blind, Bertha, my poor dear," he faltered, "is a great affliction; but—"

"I have never felt it!" cried the blind girl.

"I have never felt it, in its fullness. Never! I have sometimes wished that I could see you, or could see him—only once, dear father, only for one little minute—that I might know what it is I treat

sure up"—she laid her hands upon her breast—"and hold here! That I might be sure I have it right! And sometimes (but then I was a child) I have wept, in my prayers at night, to think that when your images ascended from my heart to heaven, they might not be the true resemblance of yourselves. But I have never had these feelings long. They have passed away, and left me tranquil and contented."

"And they will again," said Caleb. "But, father! oh, my good, gentle father, bear with me, if I am wicked!" said the blind girl. "This is not the sorrow that so weights me down!"

Her father could not choose but let his moist eyes overflow; she was so earnest and pathetic. But he did not understand her yet.

"Bring her to me," said Bertha. "I cannot hold it closed and shut within myself. Bring her to me, father!"

She knew he hesitated, and said, "May. Bring May!"

May heard the mention of her name, and coming quietly towards her, touched her on the arm. "The blind girl turned immediately, and held her by both hands."

"Look into my face, dear heart, sweet heart!" said Bertha. "Read it with your beautiful eyes, and tell me if the truth is written on it."

"Dear Bertha, yes!"

The blind girl still, upturning the blank, sightless face, down which the tears were coursing fast, addressed her in these words:—

"There is not, in my soul, a wish or thought that is not for your good, bright May! There is not, in my soul, a grateful recollection stronger than the deep remembrance which is stored there, of the many, many times when, in the full pride of sight and beauty, you have had consideration for blind Bertha, even when we two were children, or when Bertha was as much a child as ever blindness can be! Every blessing on your head! Light upon your happy course! Not the less, my dear May—and she drew towards her, in a closer grasp—"not the less, my bird, because, to-day, the knowledge that you are to be his wife has wrung my heart almost to breaking. Father, May, May! oh, forgive me that it is so, for the sake of all he has done to relieve the weariness of my dark life; and for the sake of the belief you have in me, when I call Heaven to witness that I could not wish him married to a wife more worthy of his goodness!"

(Continued on Page 17.)

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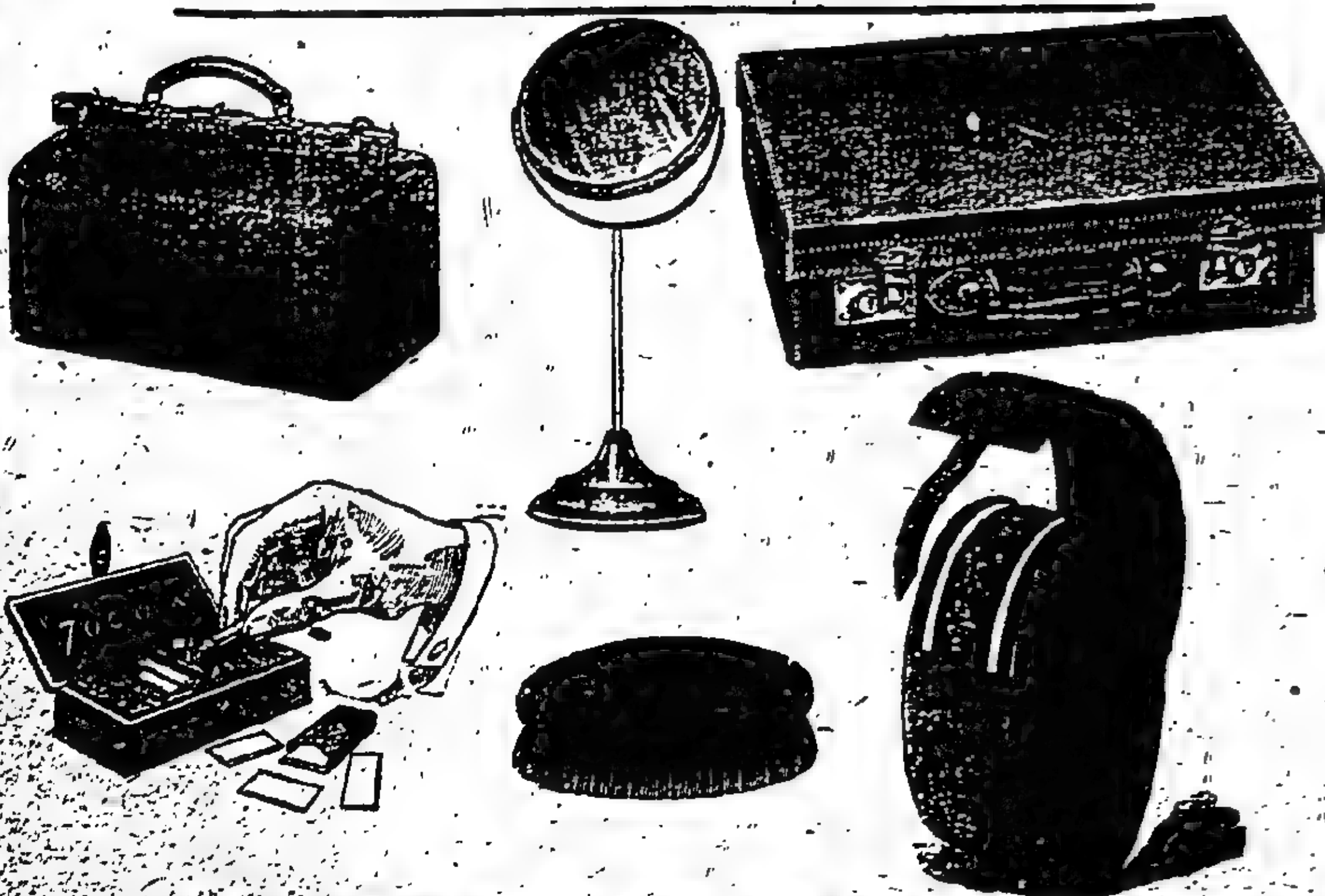
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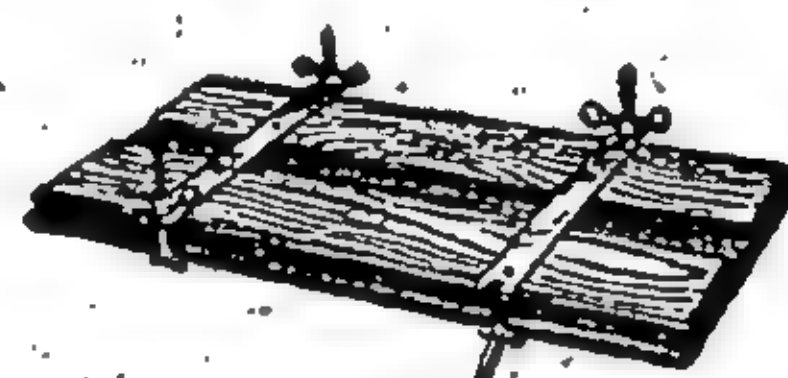
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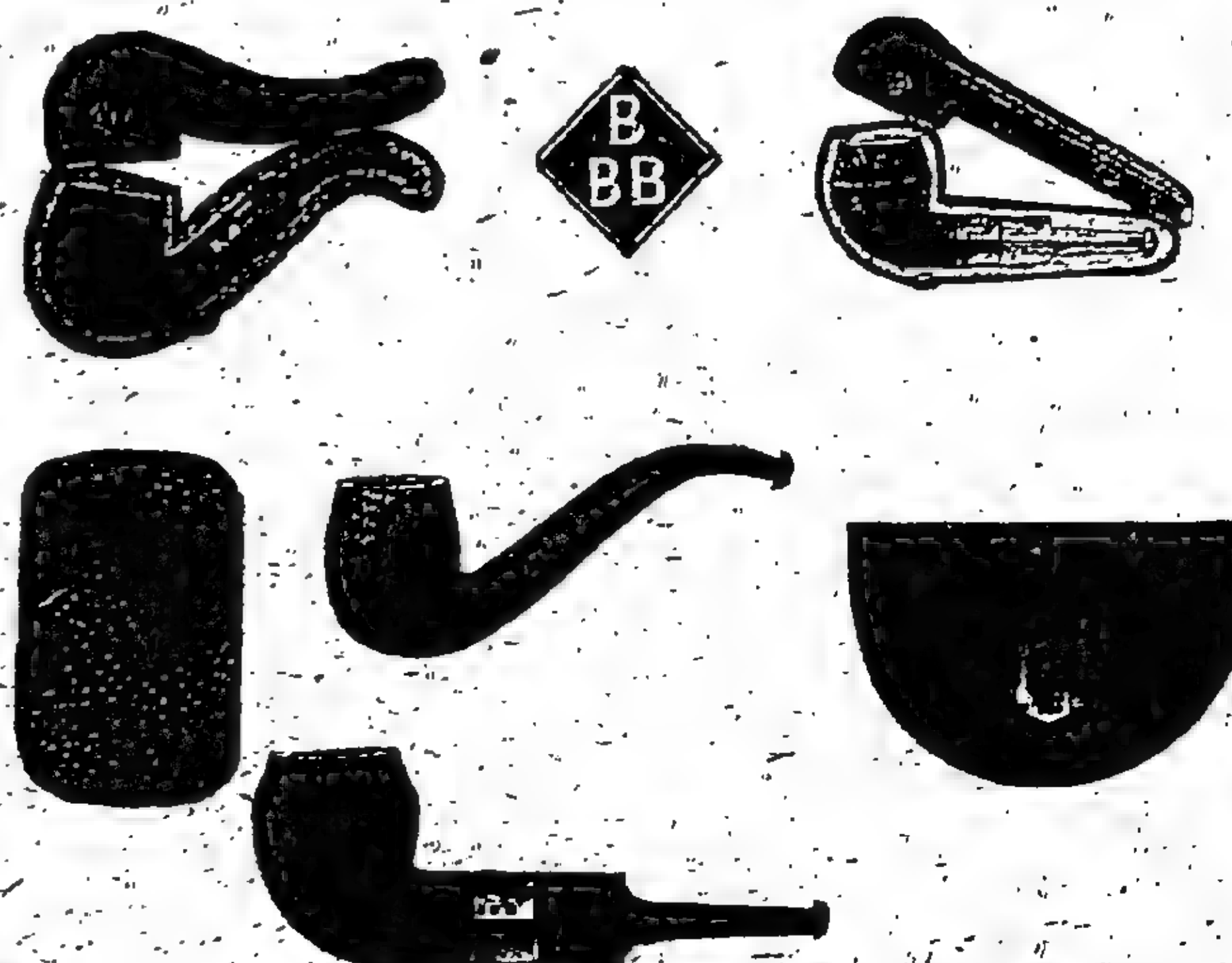
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"THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH."

(Continued from Page 15.)

While speaking, she had released May Fielding's hands, and clasped her garments in an attitude of mingled supplication and love. Sinking lower and lower down, as she proceeded in her strange confession, she dropped at last at the feet of her friend, and hid her blind face in the folds of his dress.

"Great Power!" exclaimed her father, smitten at one blow with the truth, "have I deceived her from the cradle, but to break her heart at last!"

It was well for all of them that Dot, that beaming, useful, busy little Dot—for such she was, whatever faults she had, and however you may learn to hate her, in good time—it was well for all of them, I say, that she was there, or where this would have ended it were hard to tell. But Dot, recovering her self-possession, interposed, before May could reply, or Caleb say another word.

"Come, come, dear Bertha! come away with me! Give her your arm, May. Sol! How composed she is, you see, already; and how good it is of her to mind us," said the cheery little woman, kissing her upon the forehead. "Come away, dear Bertha. Come! and here's her good father will come with her; won't you, Caleb? To be sure!"

Well, well! she was a noble little Dot in such things, and it must have been an obdurate nature that could have withstood her influence. When she had got poor Caleb and his Bertha away, that they might comfort and console each other, as she knew they only could, she presently came bounding back—the saying is, as fresh as any daisy; I say fresher—to mount guard over that bridling little piece of consequence in the cap and gloves and prevent the dear old creature from making discoveries.

"So bring me the precious baby, Tilly," said she, drawing a chair to the fire; "and while I have it in my lap, here's Mrs. Fielding, Tilly, will tell me all about the management of babies, and put me right in twenty points where I'm as wrong as can be. Won't you, Mrs. Fielding?"

Not even the Welsh giant, who, according to the popular expression, was so "slow" as to perform a fatal surgical operation upon himself, in emulation of a juggling trick achieved by his arch-enemy at breakfast—nor even he felt half so readily into the snare prepared for him, as the old lady into this artful piffal. The fact of Tackleton having walked out and furthermore, of two or three people having been talking together at a distance, for two minutes, leaving her to her own resources, was quite enough to have put her on her dignity, and the bewailment of that mysterious convulsion in the indigo trade, for four-and-twenty hours. But this becoming deference to her experience, on the part of the young mother, was so irresistible, that after a short affectation of humility, she began to enlighten her with the best grace in the world; and sitting bolt upright before the wicked Dot, she did, in half an hour, deliver more infallible domestic recipes and precepts, that would (if acted on) have utterly destroyed and done up that young Peerybingle, though he had been an infant Samson.

To change the theme, Dot did a little needlework—she carried the contents of a whole workbox in her pocket; however she contrived it, I don't know—then did a little nursing; then had a little needlework; then had a little whispering chat with May, while the old lady dozed; and so in little bits of bustle, which was quite her manner always, found it a very short afternoon. Then, as it grew dark, and as it was a solemn part of this institution of the picnic that she should perform all Bertha's household tasks, she trimmed the fire, and swept the hearth, and set the tea-board out, and drew the curtain, and lighted a candle. Then she played an air or two on a rude kind of harp, which Caleb had contrived for Bertha, and played them very well; for Nature has made her delicate little ear as choice a one for music as it would have been for jewels, if she had had any to wear. By this time it was the established hour for having tea; and Tackleton came back again, to share the meal, and spend the evening.

Caleb and Bertha had returned some time before, and Caleb had sat down to his afternoon's work. But he couldn't settle to it, poor fellow, being anxious and remorseful for his daughter. It was touching to see him sitting idle on his working-stool, regarding her so wistfully, and always saying in his face, "Have I deceived her from her cradle, but to break her heart!"

When it was night, and tea was done, and Dot had nothing more to do in washing up the cups and saucers, in a word—for I must come to it, and there is no use in putting it off—when the time drew near for expecting the carrier's return in every sound of distant wheels, her manner changed again, her colour came and went, and she was very restless. Not as good wives are, when listening for their husbands. No, no, no. It was another sort of restlessness from that.

Wheels heard. A horse's feet. The barking of a dog. The gradual approach of all the sounds. The scratching paw of Boxer at the door! "Whose step is that?" cried Bertha, starting up.

"Whose step?" returned the carrier, standing in the portal, with his brown face ruddy as a winter berry from the keen night air. "Why, mine."

"The other step, said Bertha. 'The man's tread behind you!'" "She is not to be deceived," observed the carrier, laughing. "Come along, sir. You'll be welcome, never fear!"

He spoke in a loud tone; and as he spoke, the deaf old gentleman entered.

"He's not so much a stranger, that you haven't seen him, once, Caleb," said the carrier. "You'll give him house-room till we go?"

"Oh, surely, John, and take it as an honour."

"He's the best company on earth to talk secrets in," said John. "I have reasonable good lungs, but he tries 'em, I can tell you. Sit down, sir. All friends here, and glad to see you!"

When he had imparted this assurance, in a voice that amply corroborated what he had said about his lungs, he added in his natural tone, "A chair in the chimney-corner, and leave to sit quite silent and look pleasantly about him, is all he cares for. He's easily pleased."

Bertha had been listening intently. She called Caleb to her side, when he had set the chair, and asked him, in a low voice, to describe their visitor. When he had done so (truly now! with scrupulous fidelity), she moved, for the first time since he had come in, and sighed, and seemed to have no further interest concerning him.

The carrier was in high spirits; good fellow that he was, and fonder of his little wife than ever.

"Clumsy Dot she was, this afternoon?" he said, encircling her with his rough arm, as she stood, removed from rest, and yet I like her somehow. See yonder, Dot!"

He pointed to the old man. She looked down. I think she trembled.

"He's—ha, ha, ha—he's full of admiration for you!" said the carrier. "Talked of nothing else the whole way here. Why, he's a brave old boy. I like him for it!"

"I wish he had had a better subject, John," she said, with an uneasy glance about the room—at Tackleton especially.

"A better subject!" cried the jovial John. "There's no such thing. Come! off with the greatcoat, off with the thick shawl, off with the heavy wrappers; and a cosy half-hour by the fire! My humble service mistress. A game at cribbage, you and I? That's hearty. The cards and board, Dot. And a glass of beer here, if there's any left, small wife!"

His challenge was addressed to the old lady, who accepting it with gracious readiness, they were soon engaged upon the game. "At first, the carrier looked about him sometimes, with a smile, or now and then called Dot to peep over his shoulder at his hand, and advise him on some knotty point. But his adversary being a rigid disciplinarian, and subject to an occasional weakness in respect of pegging more than she was entitled to, required such vigilance on his part, as left him neither eyes nor ears to spare. Thus his whole attention gradually became absorbed upon the cards; and he thought of nothing else, until a hand upon his shoulder restored him to a consciousness of Tackleton."

"I am sorry to disturb you—but a word, directly."

"I'm going to deal," returned the carrier. "It's a crisis."

"It is," said Tackleton. "Come here, man!"

There was that in his pale face which made the other rise immediately, and ask him, in a hurry, what the matter was.

"Hush! John Peerybingle," said Tackleton. "I am sorry for this. I am indeed. I am indeed. I have been afraid of it. I have suspected it from the first."

"What is it?" asked the carrier, with a frightened aspect.

"Hush! I'll show you, if you'll come with me."

The carrier accompanied him, without another word. They went across a yard, where the stars were shining, and by a little side door, into Tackleton's own counting-house, where there was a glass window, commanding the waterroom, which was closed for the night. There was no light in the counting-house itself, but there were lamps in the long narrow waterroom; and consequently the window was bright.

"A moment!" said Tackleton. "Can you bear to look through that window, do you think?"

"Why not?" returned the carrier. "A moment more," said Tackleton. "Don't commit any violence. It's of no use. It's dangerous, too. You're a strong-made man; and you might do murder before you know it."

The carrier looked him in the face, and recoiled a step as if he had been struck. In one stride he was at the window, and he saw—

Oh, shadow on the hearth! Oh, faithful cricket! Oh, perfidious wife!

He saw her, with the old man—old no longer, but erect and gallant—bearing in his hand the false white hair that had won his way into that desolate and miserable home. He saw her listening to him, as he bent his

head to whisper in her ear; and suffering him to clasp her round the waist, as they moved slowly down the dim wooden gallery towards the door by which they had entered it. He saw them stop, and saw her turn to have the face, the face he loved so, so presented to his view—and saw her, with her own hands, adjust the lie upon his head, laughing, as she did it, at his unassuming nature!

He clenched his strong right hand at first, as if it would have beaten down a lion. But opening it immediately again, he spread it out before the eyes of Tackleton (for he was tender of her, even then), and so, as they passed out, fell down upon a desk, and was as weak as any infant.

He was wrapped up to the chin, and busy with his horse and parcel, when she came into the room, prepared for going home.

"Now, John, dear! Good-night, May! Good-night, Bertha!"

Could she kiss them? Could she be bidden and cheerful, in her parting? Could she venture to reveal her face to them without a blush? Yes, Tackleton observed her closely, and she did all this!

Tilly was hushing the baby and she crossed and re-crossed Tackleton, a dozen times, repeating drowsily—

"Did the knowledge that it was to be his wives, then, wring his heart almost to breaking; and did his fathers deceive it from his cradle, but to break his hearts at last?"

"Now, Tilly, give me the baby! Good-night, Mr. Tackleton. Where's John, for goodness' sake?"

"He's going to walk, beside the horse's head," said Tackleton, who helped her to her seat.

"My dear John. Walk? To-night?"

The muffled figure of her husband made a hasty sign in the affirmative; and the false stranger and the little nurse being in their places, the old horse moved off. Boxer, the unconscious Boxer, running on before, running back, running round and round the cart, and barking as triumphantly and merrily as ever.

When Tackleton had gone off like-wise, scoring May and her mother home, poor Caleb sat down by the fire beside his daughter, and still saying in his wistful contemplation of her, "Have I deceived her from her cradle, but to break her heart at last!"

The toys that had been set in motion for the baby had all stopped and run down, long ago. In the faint light and silence, the impetuously calm dolls, the agitated rocking-horses with distorted eyes and nostrils, the old gentlemen at the street doors, standing half-dressed and up upon their falling knees, and the very faces of the crackers, the very beads upon their way into the ark, in two, like a boarding-school out walking, might have been imagined to be stricken motionless with fantastic wonder, at Dot being false, or Tackleton beloved, under any combination of circumstances.

CHIRP, THE THIRD.

The Dutch clock in the corner struck ten, when the carrier sat down by his fireside. So troubled and grief-worn, that he seemed to scare the cuckoo, who, having cut his ten melodious announcements as short as possible, plunged back into the Moorish palace again, and clapped his little door behind him, as if the unwonted spectacle were too much for his feelings.

If the little haymaker had been armed with the sharpest of scythes, and had cut at every stroke into the carrier's heart, he never could have gashed and wounded it, as Dot had done.

It was a heart so full of love for her; so bound up and held together by innumerable threads of winning remembrance, spun from the daily working of her many qualities of endearment; it was a heart in which she had enshrined herself so gently and so closely; a heart so single and so earnest in its truth, so strong in right, so weak in wrong, that it could cherish neither passion nor revenge at first, and had only room to hold the broken image of its idol.

But slowly, slowly, as the carrier sat brooding on his hearth, now cold and dark, and other fierce thoughts began to rise within him, as an angry wind comes rising in the night. The stranger was beneath his outraged roof. Three steps would take him to his chamber door. One blow would bend it in. "You might do murder before you know it," Tackleton had said. How could it be murder, if he gave the villain time to grapple with him hand to hand! He was the younger man.

It was an ill-timed thought, bad for the dark mood of his mind. It was an angry thought, growing him to some avenging act, that should change the cheerful house into a haunted place, which lonely travellers would dread to pass by night, and where the timid would see shadows struggling in the ruined windows when the moon was dim, and hear wild noises in the stormy weather.

He was the younger man! Yes, yes; some lower word had won the heart that he had never touched. Some lover of his early youth, of whom he had thought and dreamed, for whom he had pined and pined, when he had fancied her so happy by his side. Oh, a gay to think of it!

She had been above-stairs with the baby, getting it to bed. As he sat brooding on the hearth, she came close beside him, without his knowledge—in the turning of the rack of his great misery, he lost all other sounds—and put her little stool at his feet. He only knew it, when he felt her hand upon his own, and saw her looking up into his face.

With wonder? No. It was his first impression, and he was fain to look at her again, to set it right. No, not with wonder. With an eager, anxious, inquiring look; but not with wonder. At first it was alarmed and serious; then it changed into a strange, wild, dreadful smile of recognition of his thoughts; then there was nothing but her clasped hands on her brow, and her bent head, and falling hair.

Though the power of Omnipotence had been his to wield at that moment, he had too much of his divine property of mercy in his breast, to have turned one feather's weight of it against her. But he could not bear to see her crouching down upon the little seat where he had often looked on her, with love and pride, so innocent and gay; and, when she rose and left him, sobbing as she went, he felt it a relief to have the vacant place beside him rather than her so long cherished presence. This in itself was anguish keener than all, reminding him how desolate he was become, and how the great bond of his life was rent asunder.

The more he felt this, and the more he knew he could have better borne to see her lying prematurely dead before him with her little child upon her breast, the higher and the stronger rose his wrath against his enemy. He looked about him for a weapon.

There was a gun hanging on the wall. He took it down, and moved a pace or two towards the door of the perfidious stranger's room. He knew the gun was loaded. Some shadowy idea that it was just to shoot this man like a wild beast, seized him, and dilated in his mind until it grew into a monstrous demon in complete possession of him, casting out all milder thoughts, and setting up its undivided empire.

That phrase is wrong. Not casting out his milder thoughts, but artfully transforming them. Changing them into scourges to drive on. Turning water into blood, love into hate, gentleness into blind ferocity. Her image, sorrowing, humbled, but still pleading to his tenderness and mercy with resistless power, never left his mind; but, staying there, it urged him to the door; raised the weapon to his shoulder; fitted and nerved his finger to the trigger; and cried, "Kill him! In his bed!"

He reversed the gun to beat the stock upon the door; he already held it lifted in the air: some indistinct design was in his thoughts of calling out to him to fly, for God's sake, by the window—

When, suddenly the struggling fire illumined the whole chimney with a glow of light; and the cricket on the hearth began to chirp!

No sound he could have heard, no human voice, not even her, could so have moved and softened him. The artless words in which she had told him of her love for this same cricket, were once more freshly spoken; her trembling, earnest manner at the moment, was again before him; her pleasant voice—oh, what a voice it was, for making household music at the fireside of an honest man!—thrilled through his better nature, and awoke it into life and action.

He recoiled from the door, like a man waking in his sleep, awakened from a frightful dream; and put the gun aside. Clapping his hands before his face, he then sat down again beside the fire, and found relief in tears.

The cricket on the hearth came out into the room, and stood in fairy shape before him.

"I love it," said the fairy voice, repeating what he well remembered, for the many times I have heard it, and the many thoughts its harmless music has given me."

"She said so!" cried the carrier. "True!"

"This has been a happy home, John; and I love the cricket for its sake!"

"It has been, Heaven knows," returned the carrier. "She made it happy, always—until now."

"So gracefully sweet-tempered; so domestic, joyful, busy, and light-hearted!" said the voice.

"Otherwise I never could have loved her as I did," returned the carrier.

The voice, correcting him, said "Do."

He repeated, "As I did." But not firmly. His faltering tongue resisted his control, and spoke in its own way, for itself and him.

The figure, in an attitude of invocation, raised its hand and said—

"Upon your own heart—"

"The hearth she has blighted," interposed the carrier.

"The hearth she has—how often!—blessed and brightened!" said the cricket. "The hearth, which, but for her, were only a few stones and bricks and rusty bars, but which has been, through her, the altar of your home; on which you have nightly sacrificed some petty passion, selfishness, or care, and offered up the homage of a tranquil mind, a trusting nature, and an overflowing heart; so that the smoke from this

poor chimney has gone upward with a better fragrance than the richest incense that is burned before the richest shrines in all the gaudy temples of this world!—Upon your own heart; in its quiet sanctuary, surrounded by its gentle influence and associations; hear her! Here me! Hear everything that speaks the language of your hearth and home!"

"And pleads for her?" inquired the carrier.

"All things that speak the language of your hearth and home must plead for her!" returned the cricket. "For they speak the truth."

And while the carrier, with his head upon his hands, continued to sit meditating in his chair, the presence stood beside him, suggesting his reflections by its power, and presenting them before him, as in a glass or picture.

From the hearthstone, from the chimney, from the clock, from the pipe, the kettle, and the cradle; from the floor, the walls, the ceiling, and the stairs; from the cart within, and the cupboard without, and the household implements; from everything and every place with which she had ever been familiar, and with which she had ever entwined one recollection of herself in her unhappy husband's mind; fairies came trooping forth. Not to stand beside him as the cricket did, but to busy and bestir themselves. To do honour to her image. To pull him by the skirts, and point to it when it appeared. To cluster round it, and embrace it, and strew flowers for it to tread on. To try to crown its fair head with their tiny hands. To show that they were fond of it and loved it; and that there was not one ugly, wicked, or accusatory creature to claim knowledge of it—none but their playful and approving selves.

His thoughts were constant to her image. It was always there. She sat playing her needle, before the fire, and singing to herself. Such a blithe, thriving, steady little Dot! The fairy figures turned upon him all at once, by one consent, with one prodigious concentrated stare, and seemed to say, "Is this the light wife you are mourning for?"

There were sounds of gaiety outside—musical instruments, and noisy tongues, and laughter. A crowd of young merry-makers came pouring in, among whom were May Fielding and a score of pretty girls. Dot was the fairest of them all; as young as any of them too. They came to summon her to join their party. It was a dance. If ever little foot were made for dancing, hers was, surely. But she laughed, and shook her head, and pointed to her cookery on the fire, and her table ready spread, with an exulting defiance that rendered her more charming than she was before. And so she merrily dismissed them, nodding to her would-be partners, one by one, as they passed out, with a comical indifference, enough to make them go and drown themselves immediately if they were her admirers—and they must have been so, more or less; they couldn't help it. And yet indifference was not her character. Oh, no! For, presently, there came a certain carrier to the door; and bless her, what a welcome she bestowed upon him!

Again the staring figures turned upon him all at once, and seemed to say, "Is this the wife who has forsaken you?"

A shadow fell upon the mirror, or the picture—call it what you will. A great shadow of the stranger, as he first stood underneath their roof; covering its surface, and blotting out all other objects. But the nimble fairies worked like bees to clear it off again; and Dot again was there. Still bright and beautiful.

Rocking her little baby in its cradle, singing to it softly, and resting her head upon a shoulder which had its counterpart in the musing figure by which the fairy cricket stood.

The night—I mean the real night; not going by fairy clock—was wearing now, and in this stage of the carrier's thoughts, the moon burst out, and shone brightly in the sky. Perhaps some calm and quiet light had risen also, in his mind; and he could think more soberly of what had happened.

Although the shadow of the stranger fell at intervals upon the glass—always distinct, and big, and thoroughly defined—it never fell so darkly as at first. Whenever it appeared, the fairies uttered a general cry of consternation, and plied their little arms and legs, with inconceivable activity, to rub it out. And whenever they got at Dot again, and showed her to him once more, bright and beautiful, they cheered in the most inspiring manner.

They never showed her otherwise than beautiful and bright, for they were household spirits to whom false hope is annihilation; and being so, what Dot was there for them, but the one active, beaming, pleasant little creature, who had been the light and sun of the carrier's home!

The fairies were prodigiously excited when they showed her, with the baby, reposing among a knot of sage old satyrs, and affecting to be wondrous old and matronly herself, and leaning in a staid, demure old way upon her husband's arm, and tempting—she! such a bud of a little woman!—to convey the idea of having abjured the vanities of the world in general, and of being the sort of person to whom it was no novelty at all to be a mother: yet in the same breath they showed her, laughing at the carrier for being awkward, and

pulling up his shirt-collar to make him smart, and miming merrily about that very room to teach him how to dance!

They turned, and stared immensely at him when they showed her with the blind girl; for, though she carried cheerfulness and animation with her, whosoever she went, she bore those influences into Caleb Plummer's home, heaped up and running over. The blind girl's love for her, and trust in her, and gratitude to her, her own good, busy way of setting Bertha's thanks aside; her dexterous little arts for filling up each moment of the visit in doing something useful to the house, and really working hard while feigning to make holiday; her bountiful provision of those standing delicacies, the veal-and-ham pie and the bottles of beer; radiant little face arriving at the door, and taking the whole of her head of being a part of the establishment—a something necessary to it, which it couldn't be without; all this the fairies revelled in, and loved her for. And once again they looked upon him all at once, appealingly, and seemed to say, while some among them nestled in her dress and fondled her, "Is this the wife who has betrayed your confidence?"

More than once, or twice, thrice, in the long thoughtful night, they showed her to him sitting on her favourite seat, with her bent head, her hands clasped on her brow, her falling hair. As he had seen her last. And when they found her thus, they neither turned nor looked upon him, but gathered close round her, and comforted and kissed her, and pressed on one another to show sympathy and kindness to her, and forgot him altogether.

Thus the night passed. The moon went down; the stars grew pale; the cold day broke; the sun rose. The carrier still sat, musing, in the chimney-corner. He had sat there, with head upon his hands, all night. All night the faithful cricket had been chirping on the hearth. All night he had listened to its voice. All night the household fairies had been busy with him. All night she had been amiable and blameless in the glass, except when that one shadow fell upon it.

He rose up when it was broad day, and washed and dressed himself. He couldn't go about his customary cheerful avocations—he wanted spirit for them—but it mattered the less, that it was Tackleton's wedding-day, and he had arranged to make his rounds by proxy. He had thought to have gone merrily to church with Dot. But such plans were at an end. It was their own wedding-day too. Ah! how little he had looked for such a close to such a year!

The carrier expected that Tackleton would pay him an early visit; and he was right. He had not walked to and fro before his own door many minutes, when he saw the toy-merchant coming in his chase along the road. As the chase drew nearer, he perceived that Tackleton was dressed out sprucely for his marriage, and that he had decorated his horse's head with flowers and favours.

The horse looked much more like a bridegroom than Tackleton, whose half-closed eyes were more disagreeable expressive than ever. But the carrier took little heed of this. His thoughts had other occupation.

"John Peerybingle!" said Tackleton, with an air of condolence. "My good fellow, how do you find yourself this morning?"

"I have had but a poor night, Mr. Tackleton," returned the carrier, shaking his head; "for I have been a good deal disturbed in my mind. But it's over now! Can you spare me half an hour or so, for some private talk?"

"I came on purpose," returned Tackleton, alighting. "Never mind the horse. He'll stand quiet enough, with the reins over his post, if you'll give him a mouthful of hay."

The carrier having brought it from the stable and set it before him, they turned into the house.

"You are not married before noon," he said, "I think?"

"No," answered Tackleton. "Plenty of time. Plenty of time."

When they entered the kitchen, Tilly Slowboy was rapping at the stranger's door; which was only removed from it by a few steps. One of her very red eyes (for Tilly had been crying all night long, because mistress cried) was at the keyhole; and she was knocking very loud; and seemed frightened.

"If you please I can't make no body hear," said Tilly, looking round. "I hope nobody ain't gone and been and died if you please!"

This philanthropic wish, Miss Slowbody emphasised with various raps and kicks at the door; which led to no result whatever.

"Shall I go?" said Tackleton. "It's curious."

The carrier, who had turned his face from the door, signed to him to go if he would.

So Tackleton went to Tilly Slowboy's relief; and he too kicked and knocked; and he too failed to get the least reply. But he thought of trying the handle of the door; and as it opened easily, he peeped in, looked in, went in, and soon came running out again.

"John Peerybingle," said Tackleton, in his ear. "I hope there has

been nothing—nothing rash in last night?"

"The carrier turned upon him quickly."

"Because he's gone!" said Tackleton. "I don't see any marks; to be sure it's almost on a level with the garden; but I was afraid there might have been some—some scuffle. Eh?"

He nearly shut up the expressive eye, altogether; he looked at him so hard. And he gave his eye, and his face, and his whole person, a sharp twist. As if he would have screwed the truth out of him.

"Make yourself easy," said the carrier. "He went into that room last night, without harm in word or deed from me, and no one has entered it since. He is away of his own free will. I'd go out gladly at that door, and beg my bread from house to house for life, if I could so change the past that he had never come. But he has come and gone. And I have done with him!"

"Oh—Well, I think he has got off pretty easy," said Tackleton, taking a chair.

The snecr was lost upon the carrier, who sat down too, and shaded his face with his hand, for some little time, before precepting.

"You showed me last night," he said at length, "my wife: my wife that I love; secretly."

"And tenderly," insinuated Tackleton.

"Conniving at that man's disguise. And giving him opportunities of meeting her alone. I think there's no sight I wouldn't have rather seen than that. I think there's no man in the world I wouldn't have rather had to show it me."

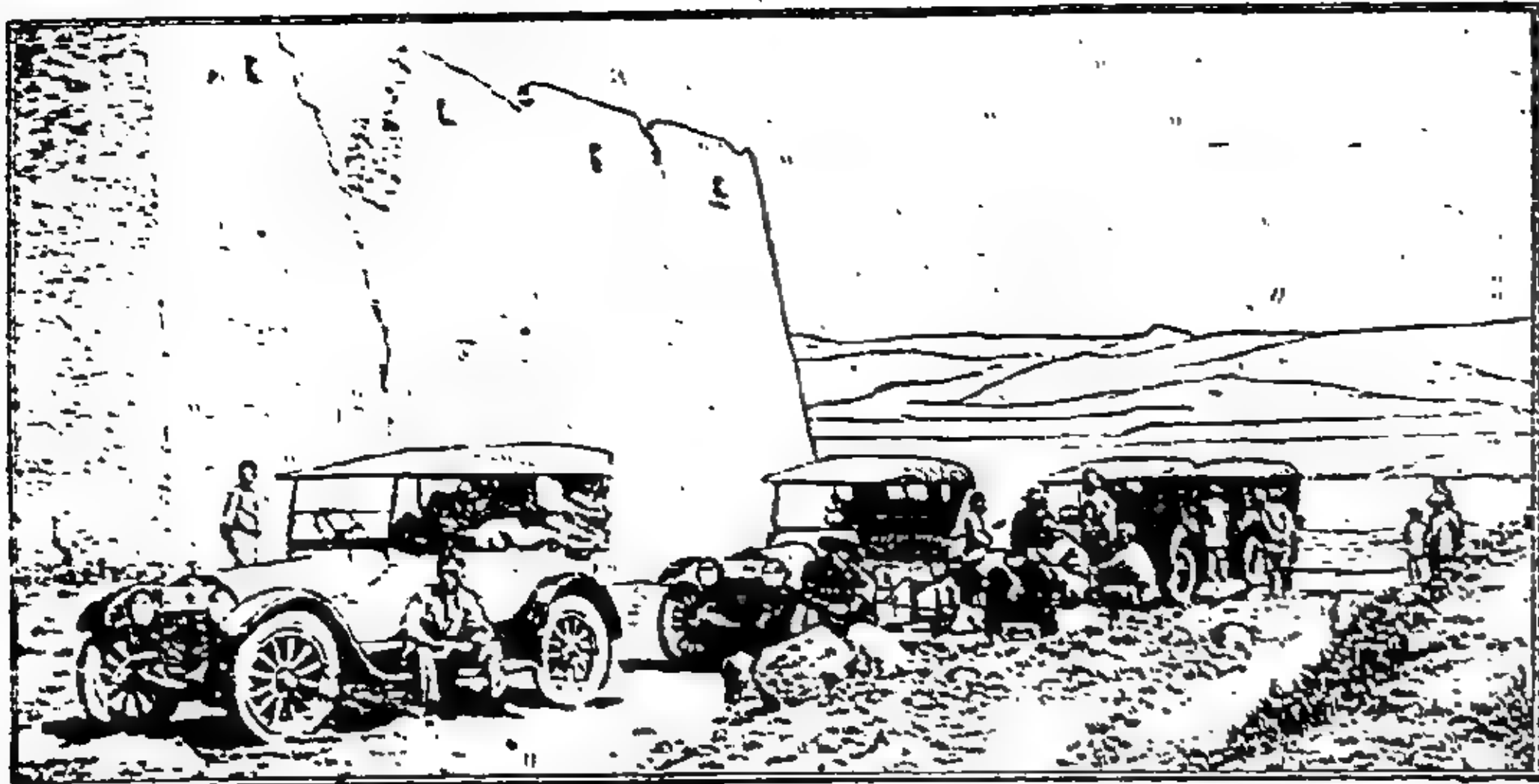
"I confess to having had my suspicions always," said Tackleton. "And that has made me objectionable here, I know."

"But as you did show it me," pursued the carrier, not minding him; "and as you saw her—my wife—my wife that I love," his voice, and eye, and hand, grew sterner and firmer as he repeated these words; evidently in pursuance of a steadfast purpose—"as you saw her in this disadvantage, it is right and just that you should also see with my eyes, and look—"

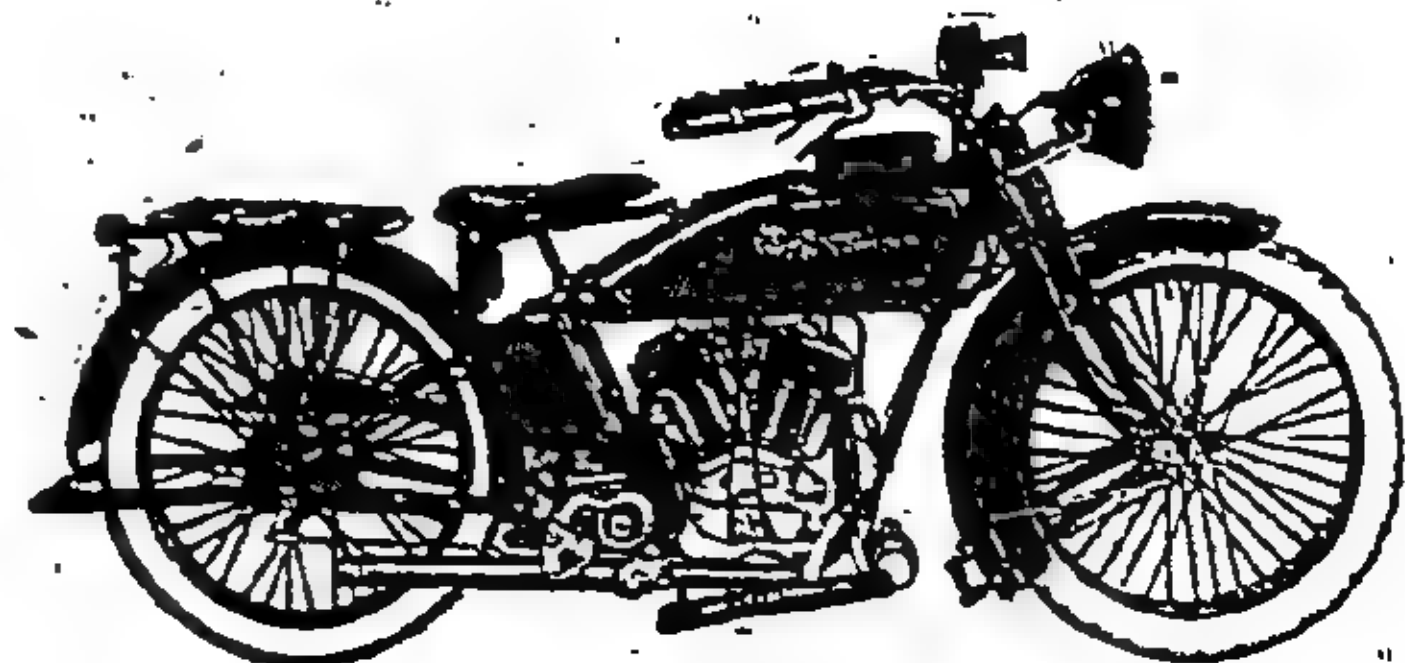
upon the subject. For it's settled," said the carrier, regarding him attentively. "And nothing can shake it now."

Tackleton muttered a few general words of assent, about its being necessary to vindicate something or other; but he was overawed by the majesty of his companion. Plain and unadorned as it was, it had a something dignified and noble in it, which nothing but the soul of generous honour dwelling in the man could have imparted.

"I am a plain, rough man," pursued the carrier, "with very little to recommend me. I am not a clever man, as you very well know. I am not a young man. I loved my little Dot, because I had seen her grow up, from a child, in her father's house; because I knew how precious she was;



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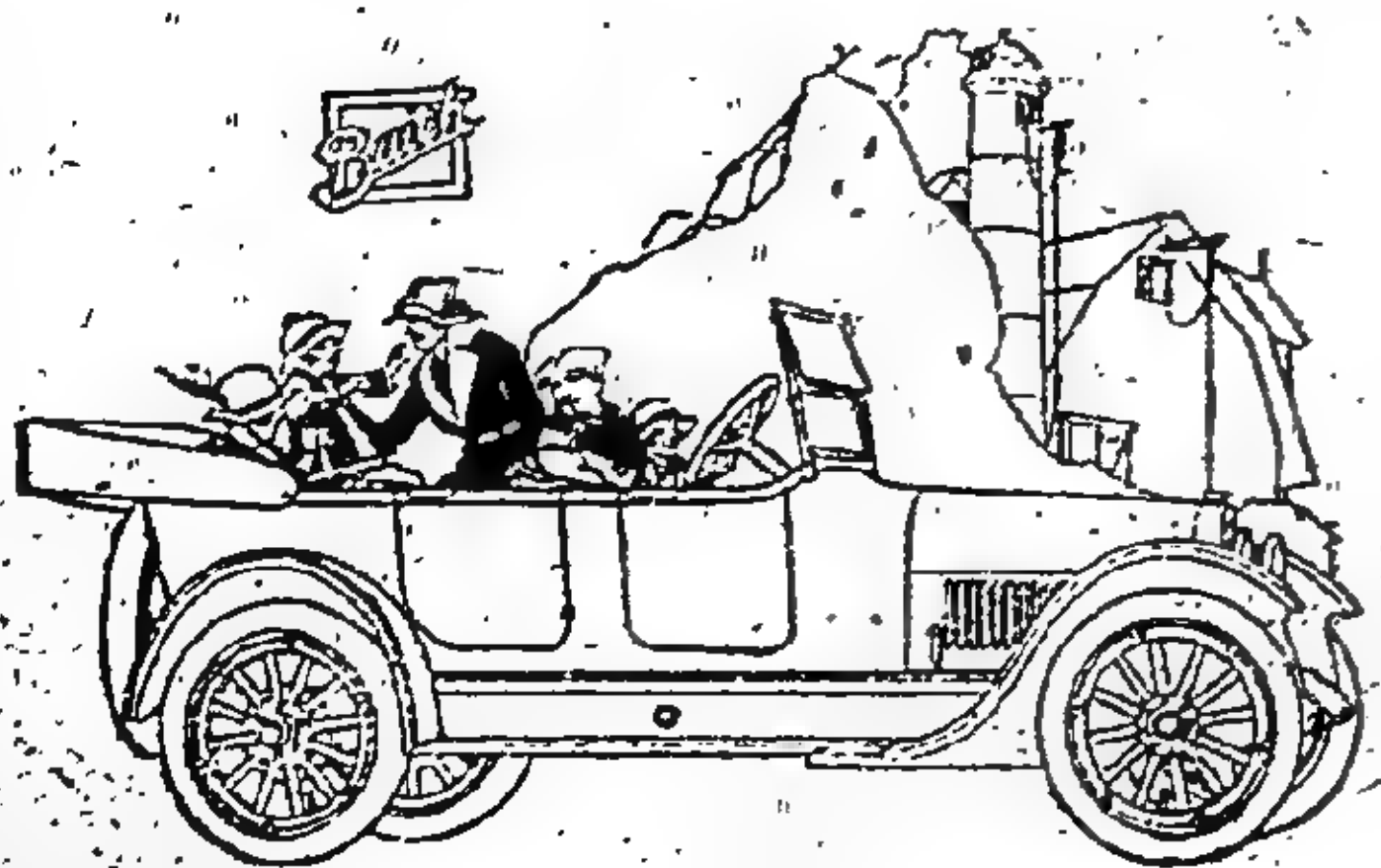
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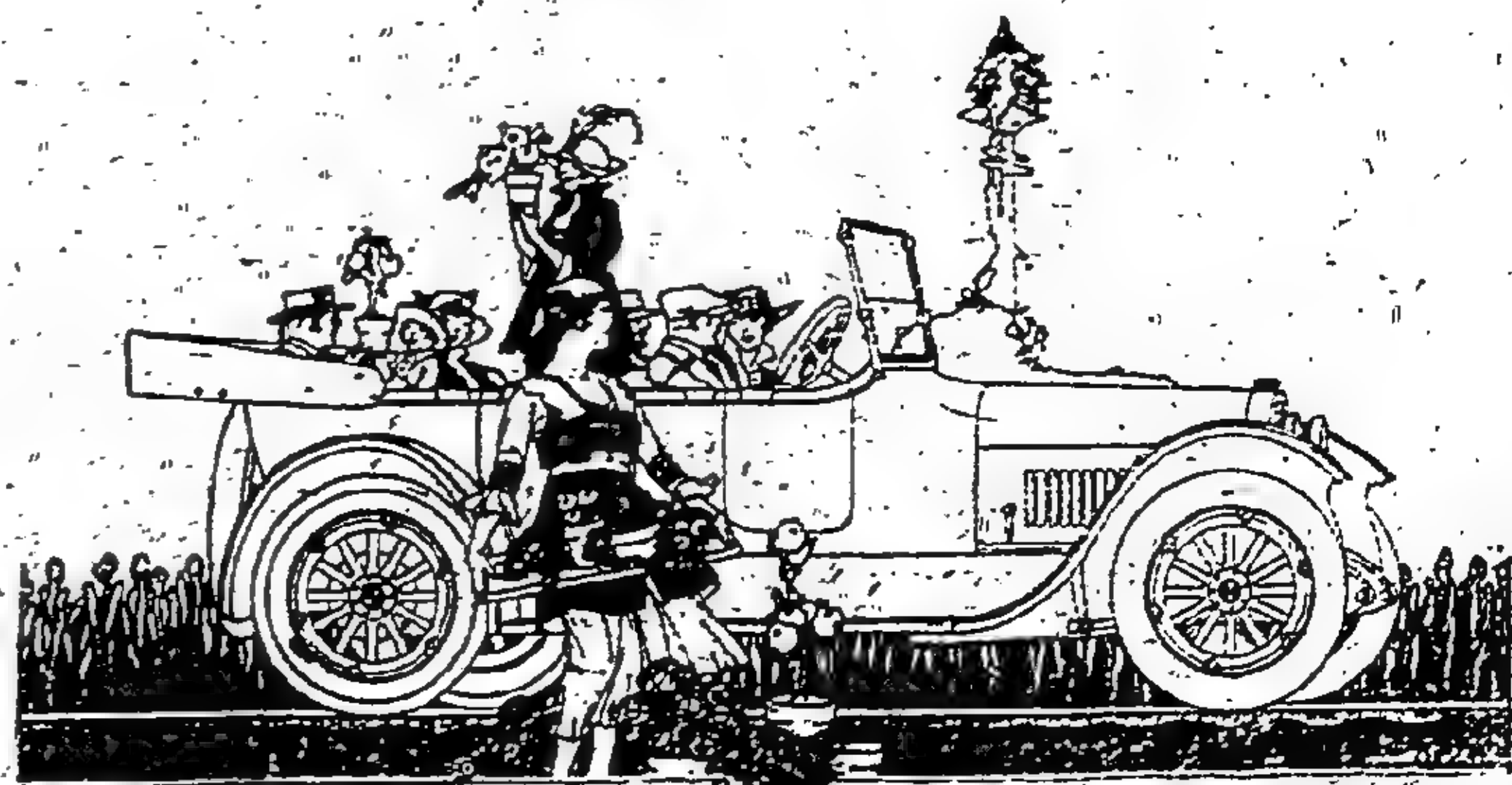
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THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH.

(Continued from Page 17.)

"Heaven bless her!" said the carrier, "for the cheerful constancy with which she has tried to keep the knowledge of this from me! And Heaven help me, that, in my slow mind, I have not found it out before! Poor child! Poor Dot! I not to find it out, who have seen her eyes fill with tears, when such a marriage as our own was spoken of! I, who have seen the secret trembling on her lips a hundred times, and never suspected it till last night! Poor girl! That I could ever hope she would be fond of me! That I could ever believe she was!"

"She made a show of it," said Tackleton. "She made such a show of it, that to tell you the truth it was the origin of my misgivings."

And here he asserted the superiority of May Fielding, who certainly made no sort of show of being fond of him.

"She has tried," said the poor carrier, with greater emotion than he had exhibited yet. "I only now begin to know how hard she has tried, to be my dutiful and zealous wife. How good she has been; how much she has done; how brave and strong a heart she has; let the happiness I have known under this roof bear witness! It will be some help and comfort to me, when I am here alone."

"Here alone?" said Tackleton. "Oh! Then you do mean to take some notice of this?"

"I mean," returned the carrier, "to do her the greatest kindness, and make her the best reparation, in my power. I can release her from the daily pain of an unequal marriage, and the struggle to conceal it. She shall be as free as I can render her."

"Make her reparation," exclaimed Tackleton, twisting and turning his great ears with his hands. "There must be something wrong here. You didn't say that, of course."

The carrier set his grip upon the collar of the toy-merchant, and shook him like a reed.

"Listen to me!" he said. "And take care that you hear me right. Listen to me. Do I speak plainly?"

"Very plainly indeed," answered Tackleton.

"As if I mean it?"

"Very much as if you meant it."

"I sat upon that hearth, last night," exclaimed the carrier. "On the spot where she has often sat beside me, with her sweet face looking into mine. I called up her whole life, day by day. I had her dear

self, in its every passage, in review before me. And upon my soul she is innocent, if there is One to judge the innocent and guilty."

Staunch cricket on the hearth! Loyal household fairies!

"Passion and distrust have left me!" said the carrier; "and nothing but my grief remains. In an unhappy moment some old lover, better suited to her tastes and years than I— forsaken, perhaps, for me, against her will—returned. In an unhappy moment, taken by surprise, and wanting time to think of what she did, she made herself a party to his treachery, by concealing it. Last night she saw him, in the interview we witnessed. It was wrong. But otherwise than this she is innocent if there is truth on earth."

"If that is your opinion—"

Tackleton began.

"So, let her go!" pursued the carrier. "Go with my blessing for the many happy hours she has given me, and my forgiveness for any pang she has caused me. Let her go, and have the peace of mind I wish her! She'll never harm me. She'll learn to like me better, when I'm not a drag upon her, and she wears the chain I have riveted, more lightly. This is the day on which I took her, with so little thought for her enjoyment, from her home. To-day she shall return to it, and I will trouble her no more. Her father and mother will be here to-day—we had made a little plan for keeping it together—and they shall take her home. I can trust her, there, or anywhere. She leaves me without blame, and she will live so I am sure. If I should die—I may perhaps while she is still young; I have lost some courage in a few hours—she'll find that I remembered her, and loved her to the last. That is the end of what you showed me. Now, it's over!"

"Oh, no, John, not over. Do not say it's over yet! Not quite yet. I have heard your noble words. I could not steal away, pretending to be ignorant of what has affected me with such deep gratitude. Do not say it's over, till the clock has struck again!"

She had entered shortly after Tackleton, and had remained there. She never looked at Tackleton, but fixed her eyes upon her husband. But she kept away from him, setting as wide a space as possible between them; and though she spoke with most impassioned earnestness, she went no nearer to him even then. How different in this from her old self!

"No hand can make the clock which will strike again for me the hours that are gone," replied the carrier, with a faint smile. "But let it be so, if you will, my dear. It will strike soon. It's of little matter what

we say. I'd try to please you in a harder case than that."

"Well!" muttered Tackleton. "I must off, for when the clock strikes again, it'll be necessary for me to be upon my way to church. Good-morning, John Peerybingle. I'm sorry to be deprived of the pleasure of your company. Sorry for the loss, and the occasion of it too!"

"I have spoken plainly," said the carrier, accompanying him to the door.

"Oh, quite!"

"And you'll remember what I have said?"

"Why, if you compel me to make the observation," said Tackleton, previously taking the precaution of getting into his chair. "I must say that it was so very unexpected, that I'm far from being likely to forget it."

"The better for us both," returned the carrier. "Good-bye. I give you joy!"

"I wish I could give it to you," said Tackleton. "As I can't, thank you. Between ourselves (as I told you before, eh?), I don't much think I shall have the less joy in my married life, because May hasn't been too officious about me, and too domineering. Good-bye! Take care of yourself."

His little wife, being left alone, sobbed piteously; but often dried her eyes and checked herself, to say how good he was, how excellent he was! And once or twice she laughed; so heartily, triumphantly, and incoherently (still crying all the time), that Tilly was quite horrified.

"Oh, if you please don't!" said Tilly. "It's enough to lead and bury the baby, so it is, if you please."

"Will you bring him sometimes to see his father, Tilly?" inquired her mistress, drying her eyes; "when I can't live here, and have gone to my old home?"

"Oh, if you please don't!" cried Tilly, throwing back her head, and bursting out into a howl—she looked at the moment uncommonly like Betsy. "Oh, if you please don't! Oh, what has everybody gone and been and done with everybody, making everybody else so wretched! Oh—"

The soft-hearted Slowboy trailed off at this juncture, into such a deplorable howl, the more tremendous from its long suppression, that she must infallibly have awakened the baby, and frightened him into something serious (probably convulsions), if her eyes had not encountered Caleb Plummer, leading in his daughter. This spectacle restoring her to a sense of the proprieties, she stood for some few moments silent, with her mouth wide open; and then, posing off to the bed on which the baby lay asleep,

danced in a weird, St. Vitus manner on the floor, and at the same time rummaged with her face and head among the bed-clothes, apparently deriving much relief from those extraordinary operations.

"Mary!" said Bertha. "Not at the marriage?"

"I told her you would not be there, mum," whispered Caleb. "I heard as much last night. But bless you," said the little man, taking her tenderly by both hands, "I don't care for what they say. I don't believe there ain't much of me, but that little should be torn to pieces sooner than I'd trust a word against you!"

He put his arms about her neck and hugged her, as a child might have hugged one of his own dolls.

"Bertha couldn't stay at home this morning," said Caleb. "She was afraid, I know, to hear the bells ring, and couldn't trust herself to be so near them on their wedding day. So we started in good time, and came here. I have been thinking of what I have done," said Caleb, after a moment's pause; "I have been blaming myself till I hardly knew what to do where to turn, for the distress of mind I have caused her; and I've come to the conclusion that I'd better, if you'll stay with me, mum, the while, tell her the truth. You'll stay with me the while?" he inquired, trembling from head to foot. "I don't know what effect it may have upon her; I don't know what she'll think of me; I don't know that she'll ever care for her poor father afterwards. But it's best for her that she should be undeceived, and I must bear the consequences as I deserve!"

"Mary!" said Bertha, "where is your hand? Ah! Here it is; here it is!" pressing it to her lips, with a smile, and drawing it through her arm. "I heard them speaking softly among themselves, last night; of some blame against you. They were wrong."

The carrier's wife was silent. Caleb answered for her.

"I told them so. I scolded to hear a word! Blame her with justice!" she pressed the hand between her own, and the soft cheek against her face. "No! I am not so blind as that."

Her father went on one side of her, while Dot remained upon the other, holding her hand.

"I know you all," said Bertha, "better than you think. But none so well as her. Not even you, father. There is nothing half so real and so true about me, as she is. If I could be restored to sight this instant, and not a word were spoken, I could

choose her from a crowd! My sister!"

"Bertha, my dear!" said Caleb, "I have something on my mind I want to tell you, while we three are alone. Hear me kindly! I have a confession to make to you, my darling."

"A confession, father?"

"I have wandered from the truth and lost myself, my child," said Caleb, with a pitiable expression in his bewildered face. "I have wandered from the truth, intending to be kind to you; and have been cruel."

She turned her wonder-stricken face towards him, and repeated, "Cruel!"

"He accuses himself too strongly," Bertha, said Dot. "You'll say so presently. You'll be the first to tell him so."

"He cruel to me!" cried Bertha, with a smile of incredulity.

"Not meaning it, my child," said Caleb. "But I have been; though I never suspected it till yesterday. My dear blind daughter, hear me and forgive me! The world you live in, heart of mine, doesn't exist as I have represented it. The eyes you have trusted in have been false to you."

She turned her wonder-stricken face towards him still; but drew back, and clung closer to her friend.

"Your road in life was rough, my poor one," said Caleb, "and I meant to smooth it for you. I have altered objects, changed the characters of people, invented many things that never have been, to make you happier. I have had conceitments from you, and accusations on you. God forgive me! and surrounded you with fancies."

"But living people are not fancies," she said hurriedly, and turning very pale, and still retiring from him. "You can't change them."

"I have done so, Bertha," pleaded Caleb. "There is one person that you know, my dove—"

"Oh, father! why do you say, I know?" she answered, in a term of keen reproach. "What and whom do I know? I who have no leader: I so miserably blind!"

In the anguish of her heart, she stretched out her hands, as if she were groping her way; then spread them, in a manner most solemn and sad, upon her face.

"The marriage that takes place to-day," said Caleb, "is with a stern, sordid, grinding man. A hard master to you and me, my dear, for many years. Ugly in his looks, and in his nature. Cold and callous always. Unlike what I have painted him to you in everything, my child. In everything."

"Oh, why," cried the blind girl, tortured, as it seemed, almost beyond

endurance, "why did you ever do this? Why did you ever fill my heart so full, and then come in like Death, and tear away the objects of my love! O Heaven, how blind I am! How helpless and alone!"

Her afflicted father hung his head, and offered no reply but in his penitence and sorrow.

She had been but a short time in this passion of regret, when the cricket on the hearth, unheard by all but her, began to chirp. Not merrily, but in a low, faint, sorrowing way. It was so mournful, that her tears began to flow; and when the presence which had been beside the carrier all night, appeared behind her, pointing to her father, they fell down like rain.

She heard the cricket-voice more plainly soon, and was conscious, through her blindness, of the presence hovering about her father.

"Mary," said the blind girl, "tell me what my home is. What is truly is."

"It is a poor place, Bertha; very poor and bare indeed. The house will scarcely keep out wind and rain another winter. It is as roughly shielded from the weather, Bertha," Dot continued, in a low, clear voice, "as your poor father is his sackcloth coat."

The blind girl, greatly agitated, rose, and led the carrier's little wife aside.

"Those presents that I took such care of—that came almost at my wish, and were so dearly welcome to me," she said, trembling—"where did they come from? Did you send them?"

"No."

"Who, then?"

Dot saw she knew, already; and was silent. The blind girl spread her hands before her face again. But in quite another manner now.

"Dear Mary, a moment. One moment! More this way. Speak softly to me. You are true; I know. You'd not deceive me now: would you?"

"No, Bertha, indeed!"

"No, I am sure you would not. You have too much pity for me. Mary, look across the room to where we were just now—to where my father is—my father, so compassionate and loving to me and tell me what you see."

"I see," said Dot, who understood her, well, "an old man sitting in a chair, and leaning sorrowfully on the back, with his face resting on his hand. As if his child should comfort him, Bertha."

"Yes, yes. She will. Go on."

"He is an old man, worn with care and work. He is a spare, dejected,

thoughtful, gray-haired man. I see him now, despondent and bowed down, and striving against nothing. But, Bertha, I have seen him many times before, and striving hard in many ways for one great sacred object. And I honour his gray head, and bless him!"

The blind girl broke away from her; and throwing herself upon her knees before him, took the gray head to her breast.

"It is my sight restored. It is my sight!" she cried. "I have been blind, and now my eyes are open. I never knew him! To think I might have died, and never truly seen the father who has been so loving to me!"

There were no words for Caleb's emotion.

"There is not a gallant figure on this earth," exclaimed the blind girl, holding him in her embrace, "that I would love so dearly, and would cherish so devotedly as this! The grayer, and more worn, the dearer, father! Never let them say I am blind again. There's not a furrow in his face, there's not a hair upon his forehead, that shall be forgotten in my prayers and thanks to Heaven!"

Caleb managed to articulate, "My Bertha!"

"And in my blindness I believed him!" said the girl, caressing him with tears of exquisite emotion, "so great! And having him beside me, day by day, so mindful of me always, never dreamed of this!"

"The fresh smart father in the blue coat, Bertha," said poor Caleb. "He's gone!"

"Nothing is gone," she answered. "Dearest father, no! Everything is here—in you. The father that I loved so well; the father that I never loved enough, and never knew; the benefactor whom I first began to reverence and love, because he had such sympathy for me; all are here in you. Nothing is dead to me. The soul of all that was most dear to me is here—here, with the worn face, and the gray head. And I am not blind, any longer!"

Dot's whole attention had been concentrated, during this discourse, upon the father and daughter; but looking now, towards the little haymaker in the Moorish meadow, she saw that the clock was within a few minutes of striking, and fell, immediately, into a nervous and excited state.

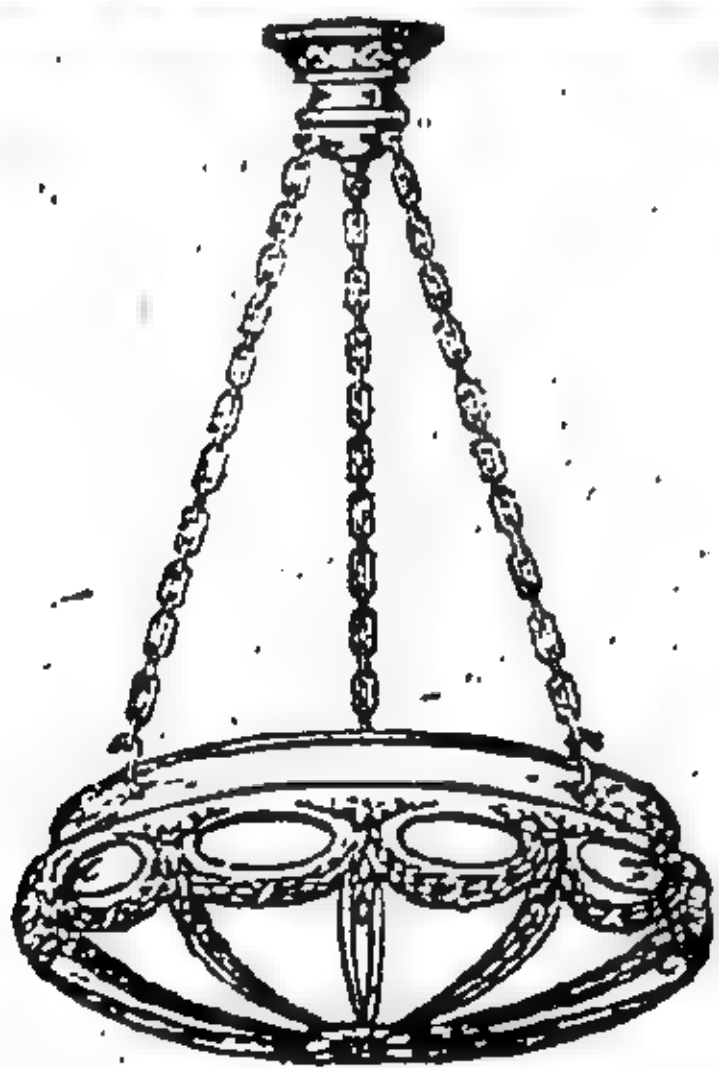
"Father," said Bertha, hesitating. "Mary."

"Yes, my dear," returned Caleb. "Here she is."

"There is no change in her. You never told me anything of her that was not true?"

(Continued on Page 21.)

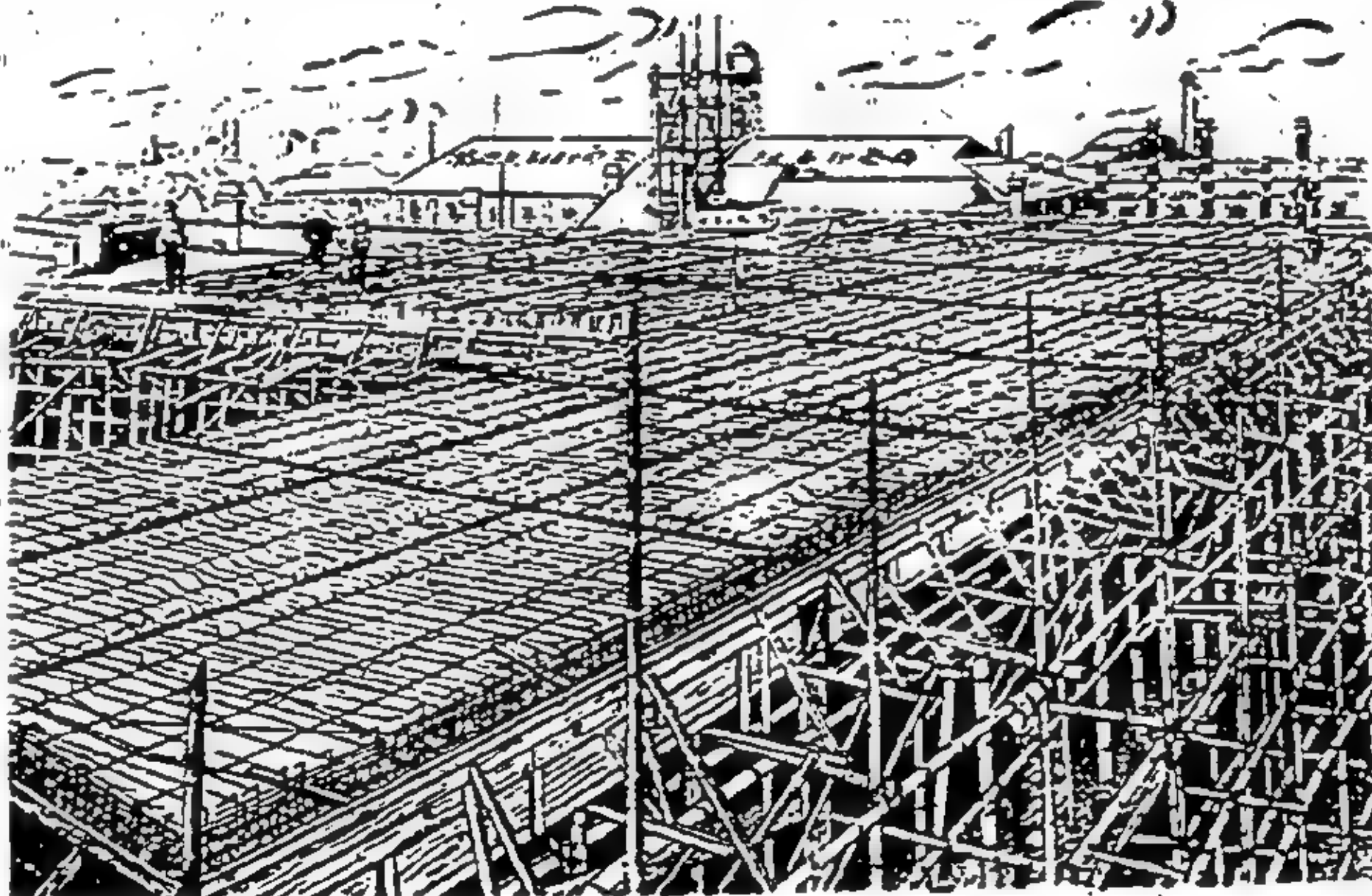
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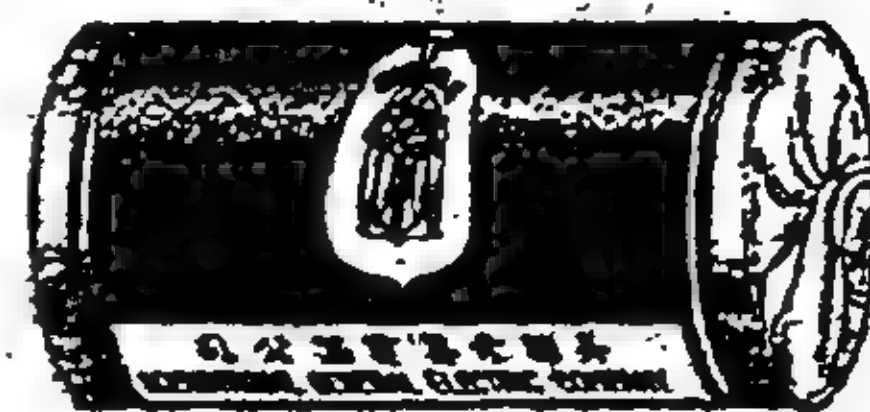
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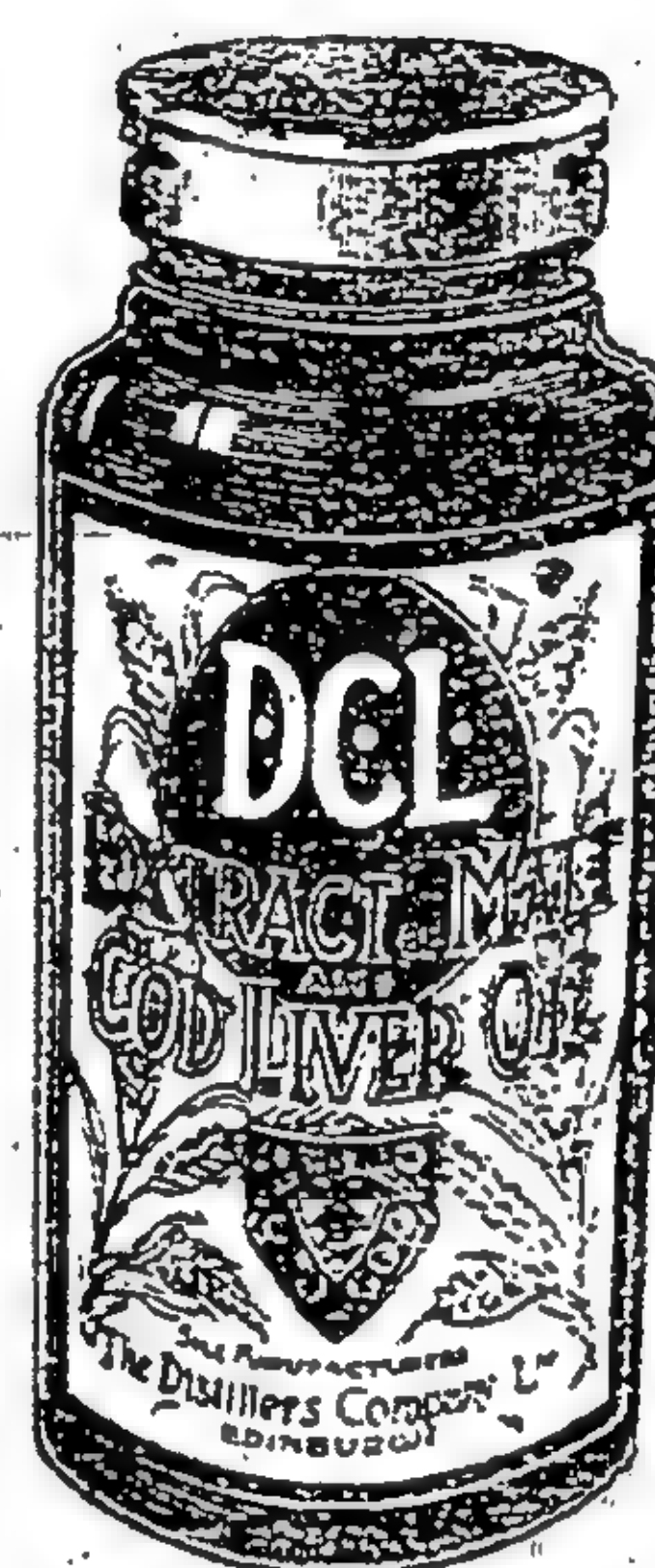
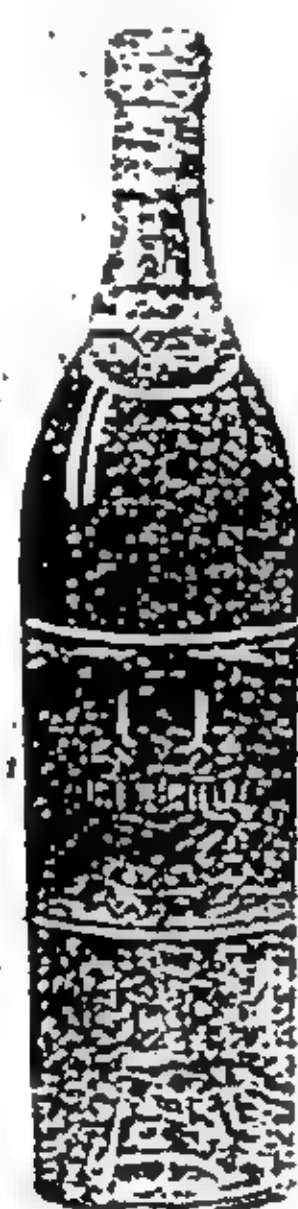
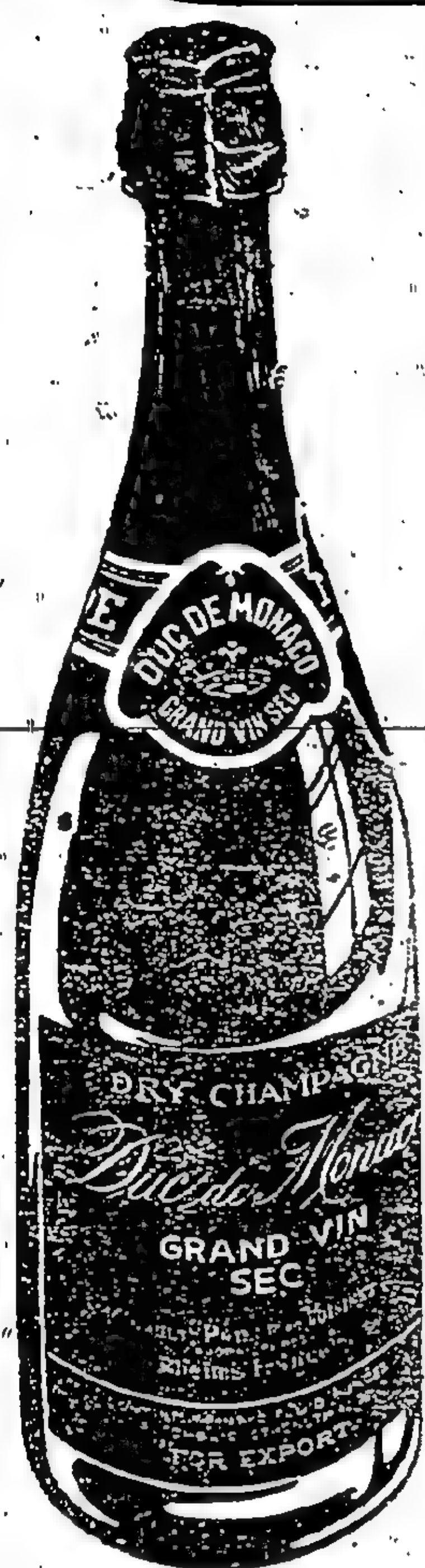
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"THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH."

(Continued from Page 19.)

"I should have done it, my dear, I am afraid," returned Caleb. "If I could have made her better than she was. But I must have changed her for the worse. It I had changed her at all. Nothing could improve her, Bertha."

Confident as the blind girl had been when she asked the question, her delight and pride in the reply, and her renewed embrace of Dot, were charming to behold.

"More changes than you think for, may happen though, my dear," said Dot. "Changes for the better, I mean; changes for great joy to some of us. You mustn't let them startle you too much, if any such should ever happen, and affect you? Are those wheels upon the road? You've a quick ear, Bertha. Are they wheels?"

"Yes. Coming very fast." "I—I know you have a quick ear," said Dot, placing her hand upon her heart, and evidently talking on, as fast as she could, to hide its palpitating state, "because I have noticed it often, and because you were so quick to find out that strange step last night. Though why you should have said, as I very well recollect you did say, Bertha, 'Whose step is that?' and why you should have taken any greater observation of it than of any other step, I don't know. Though as I said just now, there are great changes in the world—great changes—and we can't do better than prepare ourselves to be surprised at hardly anything."

Caleb wondered what this meant; perceiving that she spoke to him, no less than to his daughter. He saw her, with astonishment, so flustered and distressed that she could scarcely breathe, and holding to a chair, to save herself from falling.

"They are wheels indeed?" she parted, "coming nearer? Nearer: And now you hear them stopping at the garden gate? And now you hear a step outside the door—the same step, Bertha, is it not?—and now—"

She uttered a wild cry of uncontrolled delight; and running up to Caleb, put her hands upon his eyes, as a young man rushed into the room, and flinging away his hat into the air, came sweeping down upon them.

"Is it over?" cried Dot.

"Yes."

"Happily over?"

"Yes."

"Do you recollect the voice, dear Caleb? Did you ever hear the like of it before?" cried Dot.

"If my boy in the golden South

Americas was alive—" said Caleb, trembling.

"He is alive!" shrieked Dot, removing her hands from his eyes, and clapping them in ecstasy. "Look at him! See where he stands before you, healthy and strong! Your own dear living, loving brother, Bertha!"

All honour to the little creature for her transports! All honour to her tears and laughter, when the three were locked in one another's arms! All honour to the heartiness with which she met the sunburned sailor-fellow, with his dark streaming hair, half-way, and never turned her rosy little mouth aside, but suffered him to kiss it, freely, and to press her to his bounding heart!

And honour to the cuckoo too—why not?—bursting out of the trap-door in the Moorish palace like a house-breaker, and hiccoughing twelve times on the assembled company, as if he had got drunk for joy!

The carrier, entered, started back. And well he might, to find himself in such good company. "Look, John!" said Caleb exultingly. "Look here! My own boy from the golden South America, my own son! Him that you fitted out, and sent away yourself! Him that you were always such a friend to!"

The carrier advanced to seize him by the hand; but, recoiling, as some feature in his face awakened a remembrance of the deaf man in the cart, said—

"Edward? Was it you?"

"Now tell him all!" cried Dot. "Tell him, Edward, and don't spare me, for nothing shall make me spare myself in his eyes, ever again."

"I was the man," said Edward. "And could you seal, disguised, into the house of your old friend?" rejoined the carrier. "There was a frank boy once—how many years is it, Caleb, since we heard that he was dead, and had it proved, we thought—who never would have done that."

"There was a generous friend of mine, once—more a father to me than a friend," said Edward, "who never would have judged me, or any other man, unheard. You were he. So I am certain you will hear me now."

The carrier, with a troubled glance at Dot, who still kept far away from him, replied, "Well, that's but fair, I will."

"You must know that when I left here, a boy," said Edward, "I was in love; and my love was returned. She was a very young girl, who perhaps (you may tell me) didn't know her own mind. But I knew mine; and I had a passion for her."

"You had?" exclaimed the carrier.

"Indeed I had," returned the other.

"And she returned it. I have ever

since believed she did, and now I am sure she did."

"Heaven help me!" said the carrier. "This is worse than all."

"Constant to her," said Edward, "and returning, full of hope, after many hardships and perils, to redeem my part of her old contract, I heard, twenty miles away, that she was false to me; that she had forgotten me; and had bestowed herself upon another and a richer man. I had no mind to reproach her; and I wished to see her, and to prove beyond dispute that this was true. I hoped she might have been forced into it, against her own desire and recollection. It would be small comfort, but it would be some."

I thought, and on I came. That I might have the truth, the real truth; observing freely for myself, and judging for myself, without obstruction on the one hand, or presenting my own influence (if I had any) before her, on the other; I desired myself to make myself—your know how; and waited on the road, you know where. You had no suspicion of me; neither had—had she," pointing to Dot, "until I whispered in her ear as that firebrand, and she so nearly betrayed me."

"But when she knew that Edward was alive, and had come back," sobbed Dot, now speaking for herself, as she had turned to do, all through this narrative; "and when she knew his purpose, she advised him by all means to keep his secret close; for his old friend John Peerybingle was much too open in his nature, and too clumsy in all artifice—being a clumsy man in general," said Dot, half laughing and half crying—"to keep it for him. And when she—that's me, John," sobbed the little woman—"told him all, and how his sweetheart had believed him to be dead; and how she had at last been over-persuaded by her mother into a marriage with the silly, dear old thing called advantageous; and when she—that's me again, John—told him they were not yet married (though close upon it), and that it would be nothing but a sacrifice if it went on, for there was no love on her side; and when he, were nearly mad with joy to hear it; then she—that's me again—said she would go between them, as she had often done before in old times, John, and would sound his sweetheart and be sure that what she—me again, John—said, and thought was right. And it was right, John! And they were brought together, John! And they were married, John, an hour ago! And here's the bride! And Gruff and Tackleton may die a bachelor! And I'm a happy little woman, Max. God bless you!"

She was an irresistible little woman, if that be anything to the purpose; and never so completely irresistible

as in her present transports. There never were congratulations so endearing and delicious, as those she lavished on herself and on the bride.

Amid the tumult of emotions in his breast, the honest carrier had stood, confounded. Flying, now, towards her, Dot stretched out her hand to stop him, and retreated as before.

"No, John, no! Hear all! Don't love me any more, John, till you've heard every word I have to say. It was wrong to have a secret from you, John. I'm very sorry. I didn't think it any harm, till I came and sat down by you on the little stool last night. But when I knew by what was written in your face, that you had seen me walking in the gallery with Edward, and when I knew what you thought, I felt how giddy and how wrong it was. But oh, dear John, how could you, could you, think so?"

Little woman, how she sobbed again! John Peerybingle would have caught her in his arms. But no; she wouldn't let him.

"Don't love me yet, please John! Not for a long time yet! When I was said about this intended marriage, dear, it was because I remembered May and Edward such young lovers; and knew that her heart was far away from Tackleton. You believe that, now, Don't you, John?"

John was going to make another dash at this appeal; but she stopped him again.

"No; keep there, please John! When I laugh at you, as I sometimes do, John, and call you clumsy and a dear old goose, and names of that sort, it's because I love you, John, so well; and take such pleasure in your ways, and wouldn't see you altered in the least respect to have you made a king to-morrow."

"Hooroar!" said Caleb, with unusual vigour. "My opinion!"

"And when I speak of people being middle-aged, and steady, John, and pretend that we are a humdrum couple, going on in a jog-jog sort of way, it's only because I'm am such a silly little thing, John, that I like sometimes, to act a kind of play with baby, and all that; and make believe."

She said that he was coming; and stopped him again. But she was very nearly too late.

"No, don't love me for another minute or two, if you please, John! What I want most to tell you, I have kept to the last. My dear, good, generous John, when we were talking the other night about the cricket, I had it on my lips to say, that at first I did not love you quite so dearly as I do now; that when I first came home here, I was half afraid, I might not learn to love you every bit as well as I hoped and prayed I might—being so very young, John. But, dear

John, every day and hour, I loved you more and more. And if I could have loved you better than I do, the noble words I heard you say this morning, would have made me. But I can't. All the affection that I had (it was a great deal, John) I gave you, as you well deserve, long, long ago, and I have no more left to give. Now, my dear husband, take me to your heart again! That's my home, John; and never, never think of sending me to any other!"

You never will derive so much delight from seeing a glorious little woman in the arms of a third party, as you would have, felt if you had seen Dot run into the carrier's embrace. It was the most complete, unmitigated, soul-fraught little piece of earnestness that ever you beheld in all your days.

You may be sure the carrier was in a state of perfect rapture; and you may be sure Dot was likewise; and you may be sure they all were, inclusive of Miss Slowboy, who wept copiously for joy; and, wishing to include her young charge in the general interchange of congratulations, handed round the baby to everybody in succession, as if it were something to drink.

But now the sound of wheels was heard again outside the door; and somebody exclaimed that Gruff and Tackleton was coming back. Speedily that worthy gentleman appeared, looking warm and flustered.

"Why, what the devil's this, John Peerybingle?" said Tackleton. "There's some mistake! I appointed Mrs. Tackleton to meet me at the church, and I'll swear I passed her on the road, on her way here. Oh! here she is! I beg your pardon, sir; I haven't the pleasure of knowing you; but if you can do me the favour to spare this young lady, she has rather a particular engagement this morning."

"But I can't spare her," returned Edward. "I couldn't think of it."

"What do you mean, you vagabond?" said Tackleton. "I mean that, as I can make allowance for your being vexed," returned the other, with a smile, "I am as deaf to harsh discourse this morning as I was to all discourse last night."

The look that Tackleton bestowed upon him, and the start he gave!

"I am sorry, sir," said Edward, holding out May's left hand, and especially the third finger, "that the young lady can't accompany you to church; but as she has been there once this morning, perhaps you'll excuse her."

Tackleton looked hard at the third finger, and took a little piece of silver

paper, apparently containing a ring, from his waistcoat pocket.

"Miss Slowboy," said Tackleton, "will you have the kindness to throw that in the fire? Thank'ee."

"It was a previous engagement, quite an old engagement, that prevented my wife from keeping her appointment with you, I assure you," said Edward.

"Mr. Tackleton will do me the justice to acknowledge that I revealed it to him faithfully; and that I told him, many times, I never could forget it," said May, blushing.

"Oh, certainly!" said Tackleton. "Oh, to be sure. Oh, it's all right. It's quite correct. Mrs. Edward Plummer, I infer?"

"That's the name!" returned the bridegroom.

"Ah! I shouldn't have known you, sir," said Tackleton, scrutinising his face narrowly, and making a low bow. "I give you joy, sir!"

"Thank'ee."

"Mrs. Peerybingle," said Tackleton, turning suddenly to white she stood with her husband; "I am sorry. You haven't done me a very great kindness, but upon my life I am sorry. You are better than I thought you, John Peerybingle. I am sorry. You understand me; that's enough. It's quite correct, ladies and gentlemen all, and perfectly satisfactory. Good-morning!"

With these words he carried it off, and carried himself off too; merely stopping at the door, to take the flowers and favours from his horse's head, and to kick that animal once, in the ribs, as a means of informing him that there was a screw loose in his arrangements.

Of course, it became a serious duty now, to make such a day of it, as should mark these events for a high feast and festival in the Peerybingle calendar for evermore. Accordingly, Dot went to work to produce such an entertainment, as should reflect undying honour on the house and on every one concerned; and in a very short space of time, she was up to her dimpled elbows in flour, and whitening the carrier's coat, every time he came near her, by stopping him to give him a kiss. That good fellow washed the greens, and peeled the turnips, and broke the plates, and upset iron pots full of cold water on the fire, and made himself useful in all sorts of ways; while a couple of professional assistants, hastily called in from somewhere in the neighbourhood, as on a point of life or death, ran against each other in all the doorways and round all the corners; and everybody tumbled over Tilly Slowboy and the baby everywhere. Tilly never came out in such force before. Her ubiquity

was the theme of general admiration. She was a stumbling-block in the passage at five-and-twenty minutes past two; a man-trap in the kitchen at half-past two precisely; and a pit-fall in the garret at five-and-twenty minutes to three. The baby's head was, as it were, a test and touchstone for every description of matter—animal, vegetable, and mineral. Nothing was in use that day that didn't come, at some time or other, into close acquaintance with it.

Then there was a great expedition set on foot to go and find out Mrs. Fielding; and to be dismally penitent to that excellent gentlewoman; and to bring her back by force, if needful, to be happy and forgiving. And when the expedition first discovered her, she would listen to no terms at all, but said, an unspeakable number of times, that ever she should have lived to see the day; and could not be got to say anything else, except "Now carry me to the grave," which seemed absurd, on account of her not being dead, or anything at all like it. After a time, she lapsed into a state of dreadful calmness, and observed, that when that unfortunate train of circumstances had occurred in the indigo trade, she had foreseen that she would be exposed, during her whole life, to every species of insult and commensality; and that she was glad to find it was the case; and begged they wouldn't trouble themselves about her—for what was she? oh, dear! a nobody!—but would forget that such a being lived, and would take their course in life without her. From this bitterly sarcastic mood, she passed into an angry one, in which she gave vent to the remarkable expression that the worm would turn if trodden on; and, after that, she yielded to a soft regret, and said, if they had only given her their confidence, what might she not have had it in her power to suggest. Taking advantage of this crisis in her feelings, the expedition embraced her; and she very soon had her gloves on, and was on her way to John Peerybingle's in a state of unimpeachable gentility; with a paper parcel at her side containing a cap of state, almost as tall, and quite as stiff, as a mitre.

Then there were Dot's father and mother to come, in another little chaise; and they were behind their time, and fears were entertained; and there was much looking out for them down the road; and Mrs. Fielding always would look in the wrong and morally impossible direction; and being apprised thereof, hoped she might take the liberty of looking where she pleased. At last they came; a chubby little couple, jogging

(Continued on Page 26.)

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SWATOW & HANGKOW. Dec. 21, at 10 a.m.
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"SICILIA"	6,702	1st Jan.	Marseilles, London & A'wsep.
"BREMEN"	11,500	10th Jan.	Marseilles & London.
"DILWARA"	5,400	11th Jan.	Singapore, Colombo & Bombay.
"BANCA" (Cargo)	6,000	18th Jan.	Marseilles, London & A'wsep.
"PLASSY"	5,448	22nd Jan.	Do.
"DELTA"	5,000	25th Feb.	Do.
"DUNTER"	5,400	7th Feb.	Singapore, Colombo & Bombay.
"LAOOR" (Cargo)	5,300	14th Feb.	Do.
"ALPORE" (Cargo)	5,300	27th Feb.	Do.

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S. S.	Tons	From Hongkong (about)	Destination
"TANDA"	7,000	25th Dec.	Straits, Rangoon and Calcutta.

EASTERN & AUSTRALIAN SAILINGS (South)

S. S.	Tons	From Hongkong (about)	Destination
"ST. ALBANS"	4,500	22nd Dec.	Sandakan, Thursday Island, Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne.
"EASTERN"	4,000	18th Feb.	Do.
"RANOWNA"	7,000	18th Feb.	Do.

SAILINGS TO SHANGHAI & JAPAN

S. S.	Tons	From Hongkong (about)	Destination
"PLASSY" (Cargo)	5,400	26th Dec.	Shanghai and Japan.
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"DILWARA"	5,400	26th Dec.	Shanghai only.
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Any damaged packages must be left in the Godowns for examination by the
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TAKI MARU	...	Thursday, 30th Jan., at 11 a.m.
KASHIMA MARU (omit, Manila)	...	Wednesday, 28th Jan., at 11 a.m.
LONDON & ANTWERP via Singapore, Malacca, Penang Colombo, Suez, Port Said & Marseilles.
IYO MARU	...	Wednesday, 28th Dec., at 11 a.m.
ATSUTA MARU	...	Friday, 7th Jan., at 11 a.m.
SHIDZUKA MARU	...	Friday, 21st Jan., at 11 a.m.

HAMBURG, LONDON & ROTTERDAM via Suez.
LIMA MARU... Sunday, 18th Dec., at 7 a.m.

LIVERPOOL & MARSEILLES via Suez.
AWA MARU... Tuesday, 28th December.

SYDNEY & MELBOURNE via Manila, Zamboanga, Thursday
Island, Townsville & Brisbane.

TANGO MARU... Wednesday, 22nd Dec., at 11 a.m.

NIKKO MARU... Middle of January.

NEW YORK via Manila, Java, Straits, via Suez.

NAGANO MARU... Wednesday, 29th December.

SOUTH AMERICAN PORTS via Cape.

BOMBAY & COLOMBO via Singapore.

RANGOON MARU... Tuesday, 11th January.

CALCUTTA & RANGOON via Singapore & Penang.

YOKOHAMA MARU... Thursday, 30th December.

TAKAO MARU... Thursday, 6th January.

JAPAN PORTS—Nagasaki, Kobe & Yokohama.

AKI MARU... Saturday, 22nd Jan., at 11 a.m.

SHANGHAI, KOBE & YOKOHAMA.

YOKOHAMA MARU... Friday, 24th Dec., at 11 a.m.

YOKOHAMA MARU (omit, Yokohama)... Friday, 24th Dec., at 11 a.m.

YOKOHAMA MARU... Friday, 7th Jan., at 11 a.m.

For further information apply to

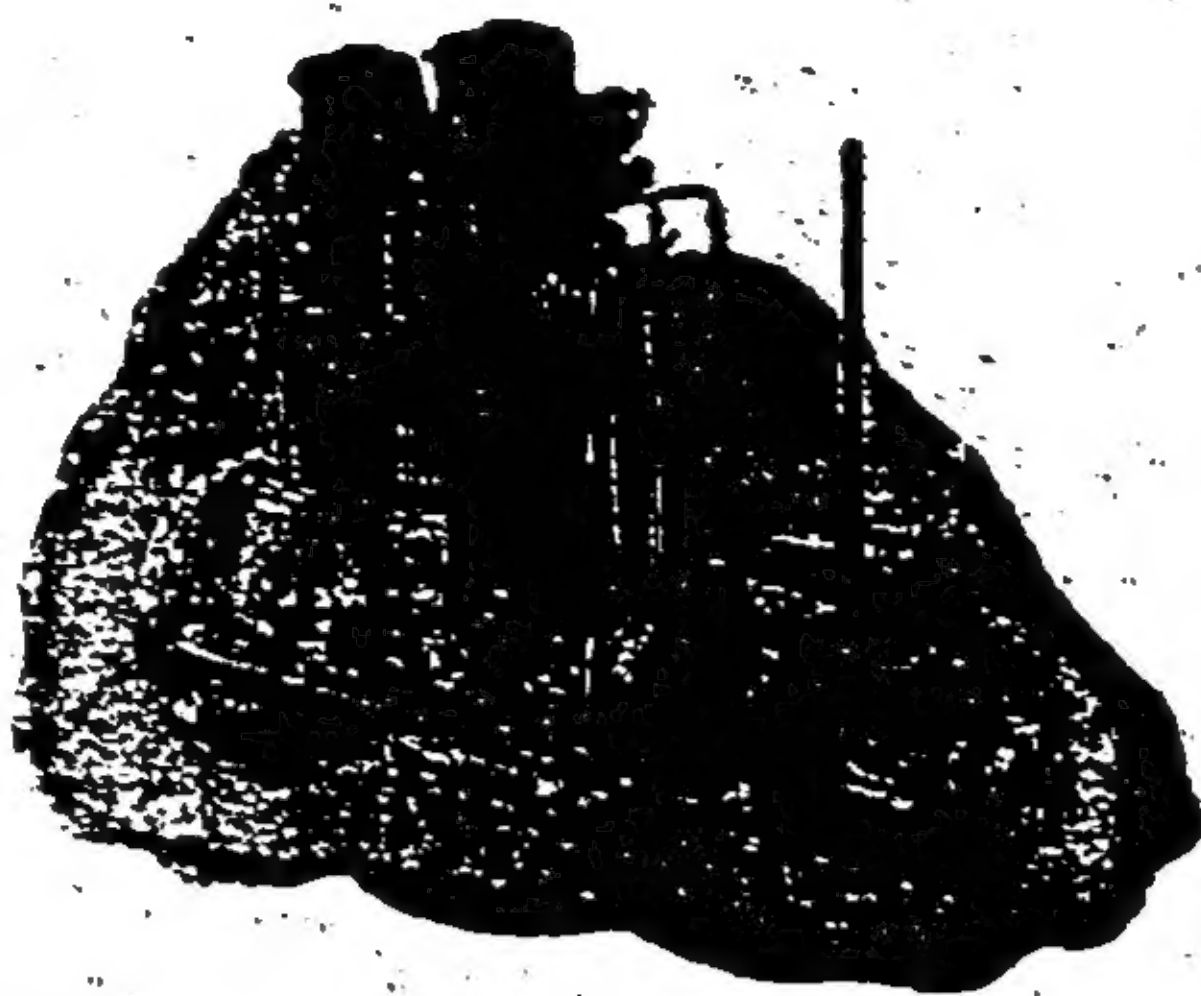
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"ROMEO"	via Suez	30th Dec.
"CITY OF AGRA"	via Panama	7th Jan.
"LAOMEDON"	via Suez	18th Jan.

Steamers proceed via Suez Canal or Panama Canal at Owners' option.
Subject to change without notice.

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The most comfortable route to America and Europe.
Sailings from HONGKONG at NOON.
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